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NG (R) — Fewer
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Israeli bid threatens peace — PLO

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israeli attempts to close down Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem are threatening to destroy the Middle East peace process, a senior Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) official warned on Saturday. Faisal Husseini, the de facto Palestinian minister for Jerusalem, appealed to Israel to stop harassing Palestinian organisations in the city. "We are determined to lift the Israeli siege, which aims to cut off Jerusalem from the Palestinians of the West Bank, the people of Jerusalem from their institutions, and to isolate the city from the international community," he said. Mr. Husseini was speaking at a joint Israeli-Palestinian rally of 150 intellectuals and pacifists at the Orient House, the PLO headquarters in east Jerusalem. He told AFP that if Israel succeeded in closing the Orient House it would result in "the destruction of the peace process because that would mean Jerusalem is no longer negotiable, contrary to what was stipulated in the Oslo accord."

Spranger opens talks in Syria

DAMASCUS (R) — German Economic Cooperation and Development Minister Carl-Dieter Spranger opened talks on Saturday with Syrian officials which included discussion of Syria's \$640 million debt to Germany, officials said. They said Mr. Spranger and Syrian Economic Minister Mohammad Imadi also reviewed Germany's participation in a number of economic development projects in Syria. A German spokesman said Mr. Spranger, on a regional tour, would also discuss how Germany could contribute to Arab-Israeli peace talks. Mr. Spranger arrived here from Amman.

Gaza airport gets go-ahead

GAZA CITY (AP) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat gave the go-ahead Saturday for the construction of an airport on 600 acres of land in the southern Gaza Strip, a Palestinian government official said. The landowners have protested against the planned expropriation of their property, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Egypt lifts ban on play

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian Culture Minister Farouq Hosni on Saturday lifted a ban imposed on an anti-government play after the director agreed to stick by a version authorised by the censor, sources close to the ministry said. Galal Al Sharqawi, the director of "A Constitutional Gentleman," agreed in writing to abide by the censor's conditions after the play was banned on Wednesday, the same sources said.

Cyprus police on 'militant alert'

NICOSIA (R) — Police in Cyprus are on a security alert after intelligence sources said an outlawed Arab militant group was planning attacks on the island, a police spokesman said on Saturday. "We recently received information that this Arab group is planning to carry out attacks on foreign interests and murder foreigners living in Cyprus," Savvas Antoniadis said. He declined to name the group. Security has been tightened around embassies of Israel, several Arab states and some Western countries.

Iran daily confirms diplomats' expulsion

TEHRAN (AFP) — A newspaper here confirmed on Saturday the expulsion of two Iranian diplomats by Germany, reported earlier by an Iranian opposition group. Without giving any sources, Kayhan daily said Germany had ordered the diplomats to "leave the country in a suspicious and insulting mood." This surprising move will definitely have a negative impact on relations between the two countries. The daily, close to anti-Western, Islamic hardliners, urged the Foreign Ministry to "respond firmly with a similar measure to defend the dignity of the Islamic republic."

Iran to hold Majlis elections in March

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran will hold elections for its 270-member Majlis, or parliament, March 8 with wider political freedoms, a senior official announced Saturday. The official Islamic Republic News Agency, monitored in Nicaragua, quoted Deputy Interior Minister Ali Rezaei Tabatabaee as saying that candidate registration will begin shortly. "Candidates from all groups and factions are permitted to join the elections individually and independent from such groups or factions once their eligibility is endorsed by election investigation boards," Mr. Tabatabaee declared. He pledged "more political and social freedoms" before the poll.

Banks allowed to invest, lend in foreign currency

CBJ move seen to reflect confidence in economy and strength of the dinar

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) has removed restrictions on banks investing their foreign exchange holdings in international capital markets and lending for local investment projects.

A CBJ circular, sent to all commercial banks last week, said banks were free to invest 50 per cent of their foreign currency holdings in triple A rated international corporate bond issues and in U.S., German, Japanese, Swiss and British treasury bonds.

The memorandum also told the commercial banks they were permitted to use up to 50 per cent of clients deposits in foreign currency to finance development projects.

A CBJ statement said that the step, seen as reflecting high confidence in the economy and the status of the Jordanian dinar, was taken in a bid to serve the interests of the depositors and the commercial banks as well as to benefit the national economy.

The statement said commercial banks were now allowed to:

— Grant loans in Jordan to

companies and public and private institutions for investment in industrial, agricultural and tourism projects as well as export-oriented operations and infrastructure projects with CBJ approval.

— Enter into partnership in syndicated loans inside the Kingdom or abroad for Jordanian projects. In the latter case, the partnership would be limited for short and medium terms not exceeding five years.

The CBJ said that the decision will allow local banks to invest foreign currency and make profits with the least risk, and will provide loans in foreign currency to finance infrastructure, exports, tourism, agriculture and other projects and will eventually ensure further income to Jordan in foreign exchange.

The statement said that the move was in line with the CBJ's drive to liberalise currency regulations and lift restrictions on foreign currency. It said the move will offer borrowers the chance to benefit from the foreign currency reserves of the Kingdom, which have reached \$3 billion — including all forms of foreign currency holdings, gold and receivables — rather than resorting to foreign markets for borrowing.

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It said that the move would open the door for moneybangers to expand foreign currency operations in the country.

The circular also allowed commercial banks:

— To buy government bonds, treasury bills and bonds issued by public institutions in the United States, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom and Switzerland in currencies of the respective countries provided the maturity of such bonds do not exceed 10 years.

— To buy bonds and treasury bills issued by regional and international institutions and prime companies for periods not exceeding 10 years in currencies mentioned above.

— To buy Jordanian government bonds in foreign currency without maturity limit.

The CBJ also allowed banks operating in Jordan to conduct inter-bank borrowing of foreign currency to cover its current payments or for investments.

The statement noted that the CBJ allows non-resident citizens to keep accounts with local banks in any amount of

ships with enough tanks and other equipment for 16,500 Marines and almost 6,000 soldiers have entered the Gulf within the last few days, U.S. Navy officers said.

If needed, the troops would be flown to the Gulf to "marry up" with their equipment, they said. "The forces we have on station are in a very high state of readiness," but a formal state of alert has not been declared, according to Adm. Redd, the commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command who also commands the Fifth Fleet.

Although Iraq was decimated during the 1991 war to free Kuwait, it has been rebuilding its forces and "they do have a significant capability," Adm. Redd said. "We take the threat seriously."

Iraq meanwhile poured scorn on U.S. fears of "unusual" Iraqi troops movements saying American in-

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His Majesty King Hussein on Saturday confers with Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa in a meeting attended by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker (photo by Yousef Allan)

Musa delivers message, discusses Iraqi events

Kabariti reaffirms Jordan's policy of non-interference in others' affairs

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa paid a flying visit to Amman on Saturday for discussions on the implications of the recent defection of a high-ranking Iraqi minister to Jordan as well as issues related to a major economic conference that Amman will host in October.

His Majesty King Hussein met with Mr. Musa, who delivered to him a message from Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, over a lunch hosted by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker.

Details of the message were not immediately available, but it was believed to deal with the situation in Iraq and the region following the

Aug. 8 defection to Jordan of Lieutenant-General Hussein Kamel Hassan, a son-in-law of President Saddam Hussein and former minister of industry.

Earlier, Sharif Zeid and Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti held separate talks with Mr. Musa.

Mr. Kabariti said later the "issue of Iraq took a big portion of our talks."

The Egyptian minister said the message dealt with "bilateral relations and pan-Arab and regional issues," which were also discussed during the audience with the King and meetings with Sharif Zeid and Mr. Kabariti.

Following the talks at the prime ministry, Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker told reporters issues of concern to Jordan and

Egypt were discussed and added that matters of relevance to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) summit to be held in Amman in late October were also reviewed.

"We tackled the MENA conference and coordination between Egypt and Jordan to ensure its success," said the prime minister, expressing hope that "consultations between the two countries would lead to a unified stand."

Mr. Musa added that regional cooperation and the Arab-Israeli peace process, in all its tracks, were also reviewed.

In all the meetings, the Jordanian leaders were believed to have told Mr. Musa that Jordan did not intend to

that embargo on Iraqi ex-

ports will be lifted once it has been proven that Baghdad has destroyed all its chemical, biological and nuclear weapons and long-range missiles (see editorial, page 6).

Rolf Ekeus, head of UNSCOM, said in Amman last week that Iraq had not been able to produce nuclear arms, that it is left with no significant chemical weapons and that all its long-range missiles have been accounted for.

The only concern the U.N. has about Iraq's weapons at this point are the biological arms, on which UNSCOM received "important data" during its latest visit to Iraq this month.

Mr. Ekeus said his team agreed with Iraq to work with maximum speed to finish the UNSCOM mission and that he will have to report to the Security Council on the progress of his work by the end of this year.

If Mr. Ekeus gives Iraq a clean bill of health, the Security Council will have to lift the embargo on Iraqi oil sales in compliance with Resolution 687.

But former Minister of Information Jawad Anani said that even if Baghdad is allowed to sell its oil, it will not be able to use the revenues for the purchase of materials banned under other U.N. resolutions.

Mr. Ekeus said that if Iraq complies with all U.N. resolutions, all members of the Security Council will have no choice but to end the sanctions. But the problem here, Dr. Anani said, is proving that Iraq has fulfilled all these resolutions.

Before the sanctions are lifted in their entirety, Iraq has to prove that it is respect-

ing the human rights of all Iraqis and will have to account for all Kuwaitis that have been missing since the Gulf war in 1991.

Proving this will not be an easy task, said Dr. Anani, adding that the difficulties entailed in the process of verifying Iraq's compliance with these resolutions will provide room for countries intent on keeping the sanctions on Iraq with political manoeuvring aimed at toppling the Iraqi regime.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Al Sahhaf is on record as saying essentially the same thing.

In recent statements in Amman, Mr. Sahhaf argued that the U.S. will prevent the official lifting of the sanctions even if Iraq complies with U.N. resolutions.

(Continued on page 7)

Israeli planes attack Hizbollah in Lebanon

SIDON (AFP) — Israeli planes raided a hilltop stronghold controlled by Hizbollah guerrillas in South Lebanon on Saturday in revenge for a bomb attack on a pro-Israeli militia camp, security sources said. The Israeli army said the planes, which all returned safely, destroyed one of the group's bases in the Iqlim At Toufah heights. An Israeli fighter-bomber hit Louzeh hill in the heights, 50 kilometres southeast of Beirut, with two air-to-ground missiles, according to Lebanese police who said there were no casualties. The raid followed a bomb attack by guerrillas on the pro-Israeli South Lebanon Army militia of Soueida in the centre of the Jewish state's self-declared security zone in South Lebanon which left one militiaman wounded (see page 12). A small pro-Iranian group, the Faithful Resistance, which is close to Hizbollah but independent, said it carried out the raid and claimed there were several victims but there was no independent confirmation of the claim.

Crown Prince urges focus on science, research

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Saturday opened the third Jordanian "Science Week" entitled, "Earth resources — ways to put them to better use," by urging scholars to help meet the Kingdom's needs in the next century, which will witness a revolution in technology.

In view of the rapid changes and developments in the world of today at the regional and international levels, scientists should adopt new approaches to deal with issues of destiny to Jordan and the region at large, Prince Hassan told the opening session of the meeting held at the Royal Cultural Centre and organised by the Higher Council for Science and Technology (HCST).

This meeting offers a forum for scientists to discuss matters related to earth resources, mineral wealth, water, energy and the environment, added Prince Hassan, who is president of the HCST.

The first decade of the next century, said the Crown Prince is expected to witness development in three axes: a technological revolution, a revolution represented in world economic blocs and alliances and a revolution of advanced democracy.

The advanced technology, he said, hinges on a developed scientific base which should be further enhanced

(Continued on page 7)

Iraq sanctions could be eased, but lifting looks unlikely in short term

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Iraq's new attitude of cooperation with the U.N. over the destruction of its mass destruction weapons could lead to a partial lifting of the sanctions but is unlikely to produce an end to the five-year embargo that the U.N. clamped on Baghdad after its invasion of Kuwait.

If the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) entrusted with eliminating Baghdad's weapons of mass destruction certifies that Iraq has fulfilled its obligations under U.N. resolutions related to its armament programmes, Iraq will be allowed to resume its exports, including the country's mainstay revenue earner.

This will be done in accordance with article 22 of Resolution 687, which stipulates

that embargo on Iraqi exports will be lifted once it has been proven that Baghdad has destroyed all its chemical, biological and nuclear weapons and long-range missiles (see editorial, page 6).

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(Continued on page 7)

Iraqi decision to air King's speech remains a big puzzle

By Natasha Bukhari
Special to the Jordan Times

THE IRAQI government's decision to broadcast in full His Majesty King Hussein's address to the nation Wednesday caught Jordanians and the Iraqi community living in Jordan by surprise over the weekend. Officials, parliamentarians and observers were still groping for answers yesterday as to why the speech, in which His Majesty King Hussein strongly criticised the Iraqi leadership, was shown by Iraq's official television network.

According to the optimists among them, the move showed the Iraqi regime is willing to accept criticism of its practices and at the same time reassuring the Iraqi people that relations with Jordan were still strong, to the extent

that the King's speech could be broadcast on Iraqi TV without any problem.

"It would have been very difficult for the Iraqi leaders already to bear the King, who enjoys both the popularity and credibility among the Iraqi people, express great disapproval with them," a Jordanian official said. "How they decided to let all Iraqis know what His Majesty had to say about their leadership, I do not know," added the official, who requested anonymity.

This view was shared not only by other Jordanians, but also by Iraqis living in Jordan.

"The sky is the limit in trying to explain what happened," an Iraqi citizen living in Amman told the Jordan Times. "It could be that Saddam is preparing the ground

for himself to defect here," she said in amazement.

But short of accepting the far-fetched "theory" on a possible asylum by the Iraqi president in Jordan, observers and analysts cited a number of factors that could have been behind the Iraqi decision to rebroadcast the speech on a TV channel run by none other than the president's eldest son, Uday.

There was a near consensus by analysts and politicians interviewed by the Jordan Times on the idea that the decision to broadcast the speech was a tactic by President Saddam to show confidence and send out a message both to his people and to the international community, which has not concealed its eagerness to see him ousted,

(Continued on page 7)

Gen. Hassan thanks King

FORMER Iraqi Minister of Industry Hussein Kamel Hassan thanked His Majesty King Hussein on Saturday for speaking out against Iraqi policies. "Your Majesty's national comprehensive speech had the greatest impact on our souls for the true and sincere Arab feelings it entailed," the Jordan News Agency, Petra, quoted Lieutenant-General Hassan as saying in a cable to the King.

"Your concern, care and support for us is just another addition to the innumerable generous gestures of the Hashemites throughout history."

(Continued on page 7)



Iraqi mothers wait at a Baghdad hospital for medicine for their children, stricken with leukemia. Medicine is a scarce commodity in Iraq because of the crippling embargo imposed on Iraq following its invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 (AFP photo)

U.S. calls Ekeus report on Iraq weapons programme 'chilling'

UNITED NATIONS (UN) — The head of the U.N. Commission overseeing the destruction of Iraqi weapons told the U.N. Security Council on Friday that Iraq's latest admission that it had a large, well-advanced germ warfare programme was "chilling".

Ambassador Rolf Ekeus, chairman of the U.N. Commission overseeing the destruction of Iraqi weapons (UNSCOM), brief the council hours after his return from Baghdad and Amman where he met with top Iraqi officials and with Lieutenant-General Hussein Kamel Hassan, the former head of Iraq's weapons programme who recently defected to Jordan.

Mr. Ekeus left with more than 150 crates and eight large shipping containers of documents from Iraqi officials that reportedly contain information on the amount of germ warfare agents that Iraq possessed and the extent of its biological and chemical weapons programmes. The documents had been produced by Baghdad from U.N. inspectors. They were turned over to the UNSCOM chairman at a farm Iraqi officials said belonged to Gen. Hussein Kamel.

"I know a wealth of valuable information was delivered to us. Our obligation is to verify that this information is correct, and more important to verify that no items are left for Iraq to threaten its neighbours," Mr. Ekeus said.

U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright called Mr. Ekeus' report "chilling" in terms of the potential for use of weapons programmes and how close we all come to a major disaster.

Ms. Albright singled out three disclosures: Iraq produced additional biological agents beyond the botulinum and anthrax they had admitted to; it had a comprehensive programme to produce and deploy some 200 fully capable biological warheads for delivery by air and long-range missiles; and a crash programme to deploy a nuclear device by April 1991.

The ambassador said that Iraq apparently decided not to use the biological warheads after its invasion of Kuwait because the United States made clear the consequences of using such weapons.

"The new information

shows that Iraq had a more dangerous weapons programme before and after the Gulf war than even UNSCOM had known," she said. "Iraq continued its work in these areas even after it accepted Resolution 687, even when it claimed sanctions were reducing Iraq to poverty. It did its best to preserve major elements of its programme in order to revive it as soon as possible."

UNSCOM had said in early August that it was not satisfied with the information it had received from Baghdad on the biological weapons programme and that it suspected Iraq had actually produced more of the agents than it had admitted and may have hidden other production lines and sites.

After the meeting, diplomats said they were most disturbed by the size and scale of production of the biological weapons, the way in which Iraq had been preparing different kinds of weapon delivery systems, and the advanced state of production and deployment.

At a press conference after meeting the council, Mr. Ekeus said that "we have a new situation (in which) we see a full-scale programme that matured in very aggressive form after the invasion of Kuwait and reached maturity in filling munitions in December 1990."

"Now Iraq has admitted 10 times more anthrax than it presented earlier. Iraq admitted it had indeed put both anthrax and botulinum on weapons. Four hundred bombs were filled with anthrax and 100 bombs with botulinum toxin," Mr. Ekeus said. "Furthermore Iraq admitted production of a new agent... and filled it in 16 bombs."

The UNSCOM chairman went on to say that Iraq also admitted to filling its Al Hussein warheads — Iraq's modification of the Soviet Scuds — with the anthrax (10 missiles) and botulinum (15 missiles). Between December 1 and 23, 1990, immediately before the outbreak of the Gulf war in late January 1991, the weapons were brought to two air bases and other sites around Iraq.

Iraq also admitted that it was doing research on toxins to destroy wheat crops and animals and on the "yellow rain" toxins. It was experimenting with remote controlled spray planes but

had not advanced far enough to use either the toxins or weapons, he reported.

"Iraq says all weapons were destroyed. It remains for the commission to clarify that really all agents were destroyed," Mr. Ekeus said. The main concern is the deadly anthrax, which is relatively stable and can be kept many years without too much difficulty.

An important "but not earthshaking" bit of new information was that Iraq wanted to produce its own Al Hussein missile rather than modify the Soviet import Scuds, Mr. Ekeus said.

"We accounted for all Russian missiles. Now we have information Iraq had its own. That means we have to have vigorous investigation to clarify no missiles are left," he said.

According to the information now provided by Baghdad, "it is clear Iraq was working on a crash programme started immediately after the invasion of Kuwait and was aiming at producing one nuclear device using highly enriched uranium from (an International Atomic Energy Agency) safe-guarded site," Mr. Ekeus said.

"It was a crash programme, a desperate effort to produce a bomb by April 1991," he said.

Iraq also rescinded its demand that the Security Council lift the oil embargo by Aug. 31 or it would no longer cooperate with the U.N. That ultimatum was lifted, Mr. Ekeus said, the day after Gen. Hussein Kamel defected.

Ms. Albright told journalists after the private council meeting with Mr. Ekeus that "the latest disclosures from Baghdad say much more about the credibility of the Iraqi government and the threat it still poses to the region than they do about the possibility of lifting sanctions any time soon."

"Even when the Iraqi government provides information it feels compelled to wrap it in a package of falsehood. Iraq has again insulted the intelligence of the council with the story even a child could not believe: That in Saddam Hussein's Iraq, Hussein Kamel single-handedly ran a weapons programme involving cabinet ministers and thousands of specialists and managed to conceal the details of that programme from Saddam Hussein him-

self."

"Iraq's four-year-old approach of false cooperation with UNSCOM is not the work of a single individual but the coordinated policy of the Iraqi government," the ambassador said. "The new disclosures by Iraqi officials show that these same officials were consciously lying to UNSCOM just three weeks ago when they said that they had provided full information on their biological weapons programme."

"For anyone to believe Iraq when it now says it has come clean would be naive in the extreme," Ms. Albright said. She said that verifying the new information "will be long and difficult" but necessary because of Iraq's "utter lack of credibility."

British ambassador John Weston concurred with Ms. Albright's assessment.

The Ekeus briefing, he said, demonstrated "the colossal extent of political irresponsibility manifested by the Saddam Hussein regime in allowing programmes of this kind to come to this advanced and dangerous state. The newly revealed information shows just how extensive the lying and evasion has been in the past. We all need to be quite careful and fully convinced that the truth has been unearthed."

Ms. Albright stressed that Iraq "must not only comply with the weapons requirements of the ceasefire agreement, but the other demands before sanctions are lifted: Give an accounting of Kuwaiti prisoners of war, return Kuwaiti property, stop supporting terrorism, stop repressing the Kurds in the north and the Shiites in the south."

"It's pretty tough for me to imagine" the sanctions being lifted in the next year, she said. "I think putting a timeframe on anything is not useful. The important point here is that when the Security Council holds firm there are results."

In July 1995 after four years of denying that such a programme existed, Iraq admitted for the first time that it had an offensive biological weapons programme with research beginning in late 1985. It also told the U.N. that in an 18-month period it had produced 500,000 liters of botulinum and 50,000 liters of anthrax. The new admissions build on those details.

Ekeus collected Iraqi data from farm

UNITED NATIONS (R) — In an unusual bit of drama, the U.N. chief weapons inspector described on Friday how he was taken to an abandoned farm to receive tonnes of documents on weapons allegedly held by a defector.

U.N. Special Commission Chairman Rolf Ekeus, in charge of ridding Iraq of weapons of mass destruction, told a news conference how he received thousands of documents on Iraq's efforts to produce nuclear arms, germ weapons and ballistic missiles.

"They rang me as I was packing and said, 'you don't have to go to the aircraft but a farm (in Iraq) owned by

Hussein Kamel Hassan," Dr. Ekeus said. He was referring to the general who directed the weapons programme and defected to Jordan, arriving in Amman on Aug. 8.

Dr. Ekeus said he delayed his flight from Baghdad last Sunday and went to the farm. "There I found eight large shipping containers plus a large amount of metal boxes," he said.

The boxes numbered about 150 and contained documents in English and Arabic on paper, videotapes, computer disks and microfiche that are now sealed in a U.N.-protected centre in Baghdad.

Dr. Ekeus said he was told that the defector's assistants

had brought the documents to the farm a day before Hussein Kamel went to Jordan. But he said, "there was no dust, they were in shining condition."

Security Council diplomats said other Iraqis indicated to Dr. Ekeus that the cache of documents was brought to the farm three days after the defection.

Dr. Ekeus then went to Jordan where he met Gen. Hussein Kamel. "His information overlapped with information provided by Iraq," he said. "Fundamentally it was in the same direction."

Iraq's new revelations

apparently were prompted by fears of secrets that could be disclosed by the defector.

U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright lashed into Iraq, saying that even when the Baghdad government provided information, "it feels compelled to wrap it in a package of falsehood."

"Iraq has again insulted the intelligence of the council with a story even a child could not believe: That in Saddam Hussein's Iraq, Hussein Kamel single-handedly ran a weapons programme involving cabinet ministers and thousands of specialists, and managed to conceal details of its from Saddam Hussein himself," she said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

200 Egyptian deputies lose gun permits

CAIRO (AFP) — Some 200 Egyptian deputies were among 18,000 people who have had gun permits withdrawn in the past two years, Interior Minister Hassan Al Ali said Saturday. "In the past two years... out of the 214,000 gun permits granted to citizens, some 18,327 have been withdrawn," mostly because people only wanted an arm for "prestige," General Ali told the daily Al-Ahram. Over the same period "200 permits for semi-automatic arms" given to Egyptian deputies were cancelled because citizens are banned from carrying such types of weapons. Gen. Ali said that 27,574 illegal weapons had been seized in sweeps including 2,509 automatic rifles and 283 artillery rifles.

Militants kill police cook in Egypt

ASSIUT, Egypt (R) — Suspected militants shot dead a policeman's club cook on his way home in south Egypt, an Interior Ministry statement said on Saturday. The attack on Friday night killed Mohammad Fahmy Ahmad in a village near the town of Mallawi in Minya province, 260 kilometres south of Cairo. Police sources said they suspected the attackers were members of Egypt's largest militant organisation, Al-Gama'a Al-Islamiyya. The Gama'a leads a campaign to overthrow President Hosni Mubarak's government and establish a strict Islamic state. More than 820 people, most of them police and militants, have been killed in the three-year-old campaign.

U.S. citizens told to avoid public transport in Israel

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The United States warned its citizens Friday to avoid the use of public transportation, especially buses and bus stops in Israel and Gaza following Monday's bus bombing in Jerusalem. The State Department said the restriction did not apply to tour buses. The bus bombing in Jerusalem on Monday left five people dead and wounded 100, the sixth incidence of suicide bombing since October 1994.

Prostitutes unionise in Turkey

IZMIR (AP) — A brothel owner said Friday that for the first time prostitutes are forming a union to improve their compensation. Ayse Firrali said that so far 36 prostitutes had joined the union, entitling them to collective bargaining. She hopes to encourage many more prostitutes around the country to unionise, but faces strong opposition from other brothel owners who prefer to keep their employees unregistered. Ms. Firrali said she had received threats from other brothel owners. Turkey permits prostitution. There are more than 3,000 prostitutes legally working in Turkey.

Wonder visits a top Arafat aide in Jerusalem

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Singer Stevie Wonder visited a close advisor of Yasser Arafat in Jerusalem Friday, bringing a message of hope that "Palestinians and Israelis can be as one." Dr. Ahmad Tibi, a Palestinian gynecologist who often explains Palestinian politics to the Israeli public because of his fluent Hebrew, received Mr. Wonder in his home just north of Jerusalem. "I just wanted to say that we all love Stevie and we are very pleased that he is here in East Jerusalem," Dr. Tibi said, holding hands with the music idol as the two sat on the couch. "He is loved by all, Israelis and Palestinians, Jews and Arabs. He is the symbol of struggle for equality, peace and freedom and we are very proud that you are here," he added. "We like your songs and we like you."

Somaliand frees Norwegian; 5 still held

OSLO (R) — The leader of Somaliand said on Friday a Norwegian diplomat detained in the breakaway state had been released but five other people seized when he landed in the capital Hargeisa were still being held. Mohammad Ibrahim Egal, president of the self-proclaimed African republic, told the Norwegian television station TV2 by telephone that Oeyvind Nordgren, a diplomat at the Norwegian embassy in the Kenyan capital Nairobi, had been freed. "Nordgren has been released," Mr. Egal said. "He himself decided to stay (in Hargeisa) with friends, but he will be leaving tomorrow." Asked about the other detainees, he only said: "That is a different story altogether."

U.S. ban on Lebanon is political — congressman

BEIRUT (AFP) — A U.S. congressman branded as "political" a U.S. travel ban on Lebanon, saying it prevented American firms from grabbing a share of Lebanon's post-war reconstruction plans before leaving Saturday for Syria.

Martin Hoke, who is on a fact-finding mission which has taken him to Israel and Jordan, was speaking after talks late Friday with Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Boustany.

The U.S. restrictions were first adopted after an American TWA jetliner was hijacked to Beirut in 1985 by Shiite Muslim fundamentalists and a U.S. navy diver murdered.

They have been renewed every year and Washington warned that Lebanon was "still a dangerous place" when it extended the ban for another six months in February.

Mr. Hoke, who technically defied the ban by flying into Beirut airport from Amman on Friday aboard the Lebanese national carrier Middle East Airlines, said there was "nothing" to be afraid of except Lebanese drivers.

"The ban is clearly political. I don't think it is a security issue," Mr. Hoke said. He also met President Elias Hra-

wi and Prime Minister Rafik Hariri.

"It was a security issue 10 years ago, five years ago but not today and now as a result of being caught in the politics of it we are losing. American companies are losing."

Mr. Hoke, a Republican from Ohio, also met managers of the private development and reconstruction firm Solidere which is promoting the multi-billion-dollar reconstruction of the war-shattered Beirut city centre.

"That work should be carried out by American companies. There are tremendous opportunities here... opportunities for economic growth for America and American companies," Mr. Hoke said.

Lebanon's post-war reconstruction projects have been estimated at 15 billion dollars, with major contracts going to European countries.

"Westinghouse should be building power plants. That's who should be doing it not some company from Italy," Mr. Hoke added.

Lebanon, where the 15-year civil war ended in 1990, has repeatedly dismissed the ban as unjustified.

In June, the United States allowed the sale of airplane tickets to Lebanon in the United States for Lebanese nationals only.

Kuwait will not receive Iraqi defector, paper says

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait will not receive top Iraqi defector Lieutenant-General Hussein Kamel Hassan "because his hands were stained with Kuwait's blood," a newspaper reported on Saturday.

Gen. Hassan, who defected to Jordan this month, said in interviews published on Friday that he would like to visit Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to explain the situation and "seek their help" in toppling Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

"Kuwait fully rejects to receive that person because his hands were stained with the blood of Kuwaitis," Al-Watan newspaper quoted a cabinet source as saying.

Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990 and annexed it as its 19th province until a U.S.-led coalition ousted Iraqi troops in 1991.

About 300 Kuwaitis were killed during the seven-month occupation.

"Documents confirm that he was in charge of the

looting of Kuwaiti state and private property during the vicious Iraqi occupation," the Kuwait cabinet source was quoted as saying.

Kuwait this year published Iraqi documents showing that Gen. Hassan had ordered the looting of Kuwaiti oil industry equipment during the occupation.

Gen. Hassan, who was in charge of military industries and acting minister of oil in 1990, said he was only following orders when he took part in the invasion and that he now recognises Kuwait as an independent country.

Iraqi state television on Thursday broadcast a tape of a voice which the announcer said was that of Gen. Hassan, urging the government to invade Kuwait and the eastern region of Saudi Arabia.

Gen. Hassan, in a radio interview quoted by the official Kuwait News Agency, said on Friday Iraq had forged the tape.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

EMERGENCIES

Agaba 25 / 40
Deserts 19 / 36
Jordan Valley 25 / 39

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 33, Agaba 38. Humidity
readings: Amman 22 per cent,
Agaba 27 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Awni Al Hawamdeh 777665
Dr. Ramzi Mizzzi 894188
Dr. Fayez Dabbas 759155
Dr. Abdul Wahab Awad 846070
First pharmacy 661912
Fardous pharmacy 78336
Al Asena pharmacy 67025
Nairokh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 649495
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Nairokh pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Fayez Oadi 248743
Alqada pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Abdul Karim Khawashheh 983023
Khalifah pharmacy 985417

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06) 53200.

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ)
Flights
(Terminal 1)

05:38 Bangkok (RJ)
06:45 Agaba (RJ)
08:00 Madrid (add) (RJ)
09:30 Jeddah (RJ)
09:55 Laraca (RJ)
10:10 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:35 Beirut (RJ)
10:50 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
16:55 Amsterdam, Brussels (RJ)
17:30 Athens (RJ)
17:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
18:00 Paris (RJ)
18:05 London (RJ)
19:00 Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
19:25 Ankara, Istanbul (RJ)
20:00 Rome (RJ)
21:15 Bangkok (add) (RJ)
21:30 Frankfurt (RJ)
22:30 Vienna, Munich (RJ)
01:15 Vienna, Munich (RJ)
01:25 Agaba (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

11:30 Sana (FY)
14:30 Moscow (SU)
16:15 Rome, Damascus (AZ)
18:00 Bahrain, Sharjah (GF)
20:35 Cairo (MS)
21:10 Khartoum (ME)
22:20 London, Beirut (BA)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ)
Flights
(Terminal 1)

05:25 Madrid (RJ)
06:30 Agaba (RJ)
08:00 Beirut (RJ)
11:30 Vienna, Munich (RJ)
11:40 Athens (RJ)
11:45 Frankfurt (RJ)
12:10 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
12:15 Ankara, Istanbul (RJ)
12:40 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
21:00 Rome (add) (RJ)
21:00 Jeddah (RJ)
21:20 Cairo (RJ)
21:25 Abu Dhabi, New Delhi (RJ)
21:45 Damascus (RJ)
22:00 Dubai (RJ)
22:30 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
21:45 Damascus (RJ)
22:40 Singapore, Jakarta (RJ)
22:50 Bangkok (RJ)
23:00 Agaba (RJ)
23:45 Sana (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

07:30 Rome (AZ)
08:45 Beirut (ME)
13:30 Sana (FY)
16:05 Moscow (SU)
19:20 Doha (GF)
21:25 Cairo (ME)
01:45 Beirut, London (BA)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple 700 / 500
Banana (Mukammal) 600
Cabbage 120 / 80
Carrot 280 / 180
Cauliflower 320 / 220
Cucumbers (large) 180 / 100
Cucumbers (small) 300 / 200
Eggplant 160 / 100
Figs 580 / 400
Garlic 400 / 300
Grapes 650 / 500
Lemon 380 / 250
Marrow (large) 300 / 200
Marrow (small) 360 / 250
Mushrooms 120 / 80
Onion (dry) 720 / 550
Orange 200 / 100
Peaches 750 / 600
Pepper (hot) 180 / 100
Pepper (sweet) 160 / 100
Potato 350 / 280
Sliced Melon 250 / 150
Tomato 120 / 80
Water Melon 130 / 70

TELEVISION

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 The Filmstars
18:30 Joshua Jones
19:00 The Mighty Jungle
19:30 Pugsley Summer
19:45 Sky Trackers
20:00 Families
20:15 Children's Programme — Rahan
20:30 Magnolia — La Marche du Siecle
20:45 News in French
21:00 Ushuaia
21:15 News Headlines
21:30 News in English
21:45 Countdown
22:00 The Hidden Room
22:15 Keeping Up Appearances
22:30 Ballet — The Sleeping Beauty

PRAYER TIMES

06:41 Fair
07:03 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
12:57 Dhuhr
18:14 'Asr
19:12 Maghreb
20:34 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swetif, Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.
Terrasanta Church Tel. 622366.
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541.
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 77261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Armenian International Church Tel. 625226.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 82433.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 664195.
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Normal summer weather conditions will prevail with winds north-westerly moderate to active. In Agaba, winds will be northerly moderate to active and dusty, and seas calm.

Min/Max temp.
Amman 20/33

Arab Gulf states set to boost 1995 oil income, cut deficit

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Oil export earnings by six Arab Gulf states will likely grow in 1995 and help them ease their budget deficits and reverse a downturn in their economies, experts said Friday.

Although oil prices have slipped over the past few weeks, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states expect their income to be higher than in 1994 due to a strong improvement in the first half of 1995, the experts said.

"Gulf states expect the average oil price to be higher this year than in 1994 due to relative compliance by OPEC with its production ceiling. This has made them project an increase in their 1995 revenues by between 10 and 15 per cent," said an economic expert close to the GCC.

The average price of OPEC's basket of seven crudes surged to around \$17.5 in the first half of 1995 compared with around \$14.5 in the first half of 1994 and \$15.5 in the whole of 1994.

With prices at around \$15.8 currently, the average price will likely range between \$16 and \$17 in 1995, the experts said.

They noted prices were unlikely to decline further in the last quarter as seasonal demand picks up, and the 12-nation Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is staying mostly within the official output ceiling.

The experts also cited U.S. statements downplaying speculation about an imminent removal of the oil embargo against Iraq. Such speculation had in the past put pressure on oil prices although several OPEC members had tried to assure the market they could absorb the return of the Iraqis.

United Nations disarmament chief Rolf Ekeus raised hopes last week of a U.N. resolution easing the crippling Gulf war sanctions on Iraq after Baghdad provided him with fresh information about its biological warfare programme.

Mr. Ekeus, who was to report to the U.N. Security Council Friday on his latest mission in Baghdad, said the

new information had quickened the process towards ending the five-year-old embargo.

But the United States quickly dashed hopes of such a move, with State Department spokesman David Johnson saying Iraq's response was not enough.

"Iraq must demonstrate its peaceful intentions by complying with all its obligations," he told reporters in Washington on Wednesday.

He referred to Kuwaiti prisoners of war in Iraq, return of Kuwaiti property seized during the 1990 Iraqi invasion and Baghdad's involvement in terrorism.

Oil executives in the Gulf said crude prices remained relatively firm because of the latest political upheaval in Iraq, which was the second biggest oil producer in OPEC before the invasion of neighbouring Kuwait.

With an average price of between \$16 and \$17 a barrel and production of around 13

million barrels per day, GCC oil revenues are expected to range between \$76 billion and \$80 billion in 1995, they said.

This compares with around \$70 billion in 1994 and nearly \$74 billion in 1993, when crude prices averaged \$16.33.

The 1995 price is also higher by \$1 to \$2 than the level projected in most GCC budgets, which are financed mainly from oil exports.

"There is no doubt this will largely support the GCC coffers and reduce their budget deficits unless there was an unexpected increase in spending. The revenue growth will also boost their economies, most of which recorded a negative growth in 1994 due to low oil prices," a Gulf economist said.

The combined GCC budget deficit was projected at around \$9.6 billion in 1995 compared with \$17.3 billion in 1994. The 1994 shortfall was lower because most members trimmed expenditure and forecast higher revenue.



A Bangladeshi river gypsy, woman sets out on a country boat with her merchandise for sale at Dhaka's low-lying Kaliganj suburb. These gypsies, who live on wooden boats earning a wage from selling herbal medicines and jewellery, are on the verge of dying out as many of the young choose an

urban lifestyle over life on the river. The upcoming U.N. Conference on Women in Beijing in September will address issues such as problems women face in health, education and access to economic resources and positions of political power (AFP photo)

French jobs, austerity poser after resignation of Madelin

PARIS (R) — French unions and opposition parties Saturday welcomed the shock resignation of Finance Minister Alain Madelin and predicted the government faced future crises in reconciling its twin plans of job creation and budget curbs.

Mr. Madelin was forced out 100 days after the formation of the centre-right government Friday for suggesting less generous public sector pensions and welfare handouts, contradicting the spirit of reforms outlined by President Jacques Chirac.

Newspapers were unanimous in calling it the first crisis for the new government and said Mr. Madelin had been forced out. "Juppe sacks Madelin," the Parisien said.

Socialist Party leader Henri Emmanuelli said Mr. Madelin's departure was "the first serious political evidence of the demagogic contradictions that made up the web of Mr. Chirac's policies... in the presidential campaign. There will be more."

Mr. Chirac has said

France's top priority will be a war on near-record unemployment and extra aid for the homeless and the poor. At the same time, France is planning austerity to slash a huge deficit.

"Madelin's aggressive behaviour left the government no choice," said Louis Vianney, general secretary of the communist CGT. But he added: "We need more than just this minister's resignation to change things."

Mr. Madelin's successor Jean Arthurs, 50, until now minister for economic development and planning and seen as less outspoken and less for a free marketer, pledged to stick to Mr. Chirac's policies.

The first priority is "winning the battle for jobs while preserving social cohesion... the second priority is to control public spending... and to cut deficits," he said Saturday.

Mr. Juppe, announcing Mr. Madelin's departure without a word of regret, said Mr. Madelin's statements "contradicted the govern-

ment's desire for reform based on policies of fiscal and social justice."

Communist Party boss Robert Hue said Mr. Madelin's departure highlighted contradictions in policy between jobs and Mr. Madelin's crusade to enable France to meet strict economic criteria in the European Union's Maastricht treaty.

"You can't claim to attack a social fracture while serving Maastricht and 'money as king,'" he said.

Mr. Chirac will meet Mr. Madelin Tuesday, the Elysee Palace said.

The daily Liberation said it would complicate preparations for the 1996 budget and was especially bad for France "where the departing minister was a sort of guarantee of financial orthodoxy in the eyes of the financial community."

Earlier this month, Mr. Juppe ordered ministers to cut France's public sector deficit to four per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) next year from a forecast five per cent rate this year.

ASEAN decides to remove tariffs on 1,304 farm products

SINGAPORE (AFP) — The booming South East Asian economies decided Friday to liberalise tariffs for unprocessed agricultural products for the first time as part of an effort to establish a free-trade area by 2003.

Agriculture ministers of the seven-member Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) announced at a joint news conference here that tariff reduction on 1,304 farm products would be implemented from Jan. 1, 1996.

The list of the product was not made available.

"This is the first time tariffs

for unprocessed agriculture products are to be reduced," ASEAN Secretary General Ajit Singh said after two days of talks among the grouping's agriculture ministers.

ASEAN comprises Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, which joined the grouping this month and is scheduled to come on board the free-trade hand-wagon in 2006.

The six other ASEAN countries have vowed to reduce tariffs to a maximum five per cent by January 2003 through a mechanism called the Common Effective Pre-

ferential Tariff (CEPT) scheme.

The tariff reduction process for most manufactured and processed agricultural products began in 1993 under theCEPT scheme, the engine of the ASEAN Free Trade Area.

Mr. Singh said that the ministers also decided that individual nations will pre-

pare a list of "sensitive" unprocessed agriculture products for which tariffs could also be reduced.

The list would be submitted to the ASEAN economic ministers meeting in Brunei next month, which would decide on a broad mechanism to liberalise regional trade in farm and manufactured products considered sensitive by member countries, he said.

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argentin

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

MILOB
OTTOH
RUNEY
DEEBIS

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: CLEFT MERCY DOUBLY NOODLE

Saturday's Jumbles: CLEFT MERCY DOUBLY NOODLE

THE Daily Crossword by George Urquhart

ACROSS

- Panorama
- Riding whip
- Sailor's drink
- Great expanse
- Time period
- Pro —
- IN city
- Opposed
- Baseball stat
- Fine spray
- Tough, fibrous tissue
- Loudness unit
- an ear (listen)
- Learned person
- Far from stingy
- Hag
- Mardi —
- Florence's river
- Mine entrance
- Get up
- Compensated
- "Whatever —"
- Wants
- "Little Women" character
- Same as above
- Land and the buildings upon it
- Cash in
- Smell
- Use profanely
- Kitchen device
- Narrow opening
- Wander about
- Sitarist Shankar
- LA city
- Actor Guinness
- Enthusiasm
- Senator Hatch
- Singer Home
- Terrible
- Immature

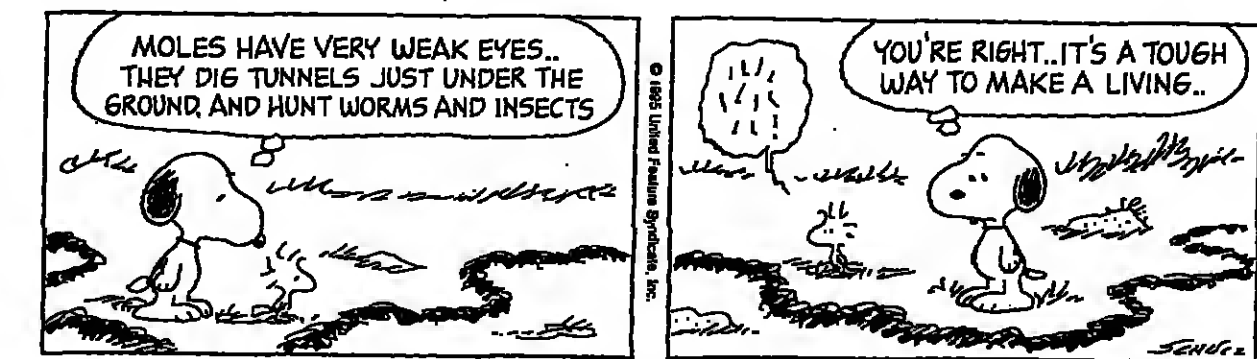
DOWN

- Cast a ballot
- Bakery worker
- Antitoxins
- Jailor
- Windflower
- Pursue
- Disastrous defeat
- Not home
- Make-believe
- MI city
- Author Ayn —
- Sarge's dog
- Profit
- Indication
- Comp. dir.
- CA city
- Tether
- Overcharge for tickets
- Passion
- Curtain fabric
- Southern dish
- Speak in a pompous manner
- Bring together
- Biblical wicked city
- Actress Garson
- Soaked up
- Annihilate
- Food fish
- Devastation
- Genetic copy
- Nuncupative
- Colorless
- Divisible by two
- Headliner
- Acknowledged advocate
- Not "ler"
- Xiaoping (Chinese leader)
- Baba
- Spanish gold

Yesterday's puzzle solved:

PAPA WADED SHAW
ELANI ILENE TONT
LIRA LORIS ARIE
EEK THUNDERBALL
GNASHED ROLLEO
AIL SUEDE
THE TEMPEST AB
AIROF ANS ATTIC
MER STORMFRONT
GOWER TOU
ACCEDER ANNEXED
FUNNELCLOUDRAE
IGOR TOURS OASE
RATE ELITE SAYER
ETES ROSAS ISLE

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n' Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, AUGUST 27, 1995

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Being with friends and improving associations is fine today. Take pains to handle routine task in efficient manner. Get it all out of the way.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Show appreciation to those who have power over your affairs and gain their further goodwill. Use modern methods to improve your work today and thus increase your success.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 20) See what you can do about enlarging your vision so that you may advance in your line of endeavor and be wise to any methods that will help you along.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Take no risks with your health today. Handle your responsibilities more efficiently and it becomes easier for you to get them done.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Support those associates who need your help now. Listen to the complaints of family members today and give help where needed to solving problems. Don't put this on a back burner.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You have to be more enthused if you are to get the tasks done that are important to you today. Strive for increased happiness in your personal life.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Take time to put your business and financial affairs in better order. Be sure to keep promises that you have made to others and you will be well respected.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Be more considerate of the needs of family members today and in establishing more harmony at home. Avoid one who gossips too much about everything... especially about you!

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Discuss your views with associates and improve regular routines today. Plan how to gain your most cherished aims and make the effort to make them happen.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Look over your financial condition and then confer with experts to improve it. Take no risks in motion today or there could be trouble.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Use tact with others and they will soon give you the favours you desire. The evening is fine for social pleasures with the one you are fond of.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You are able to communicate well with associates and can advance in career matters today. Side-step a troublemaker and you will be successful.

Birthstone of August: Peridot — Golden Quartz

Business daily beat

Jordan, Israel to sign agricultural agreement in few days

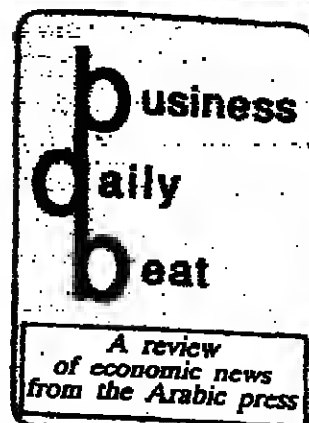
JORDAN AND ISRAEL are expected to sign an agricultural agreement in the coming months, according to a Jordanian official. The agreement, which would allow Jordanian farmers to export agricultural products to Israel, is expected to be signed within a few days. The agreement is seen as a significant step towards normalizing relations between the two countries. It would also provide a boost to the Jordanian economy, which has been struggling since the end of the Gulf War. The agreement is expected to cover a wide range of agricultural products, including wheat, barley, and various fruits and vegetables. It would also allow for the exchange of agricultural technology and expertise between the two countries. The agreement is expected to be signed in Amman, Jordan.

AN EXTRAORDINARY assembly of the Jordanian Parliament is expected to take place in the coming days. The assembly is expected to discuss a range of important issues, including the economy, education, and health. It is also expected to discuss the proposed agricultural agreement with Israel. The assembly is expected to be a landmark event in Jordanian history, as it will be the first time that the parliament has met since the end of the Gulf War. The assembly is expected to be held in Amman, Jordan.

THE JORDANIAN Internal Revenue Service has announced that it has received a record number of tax returns for the year 1994. The number of returns received was 10,000, a significant increase from the 7,000 returns received in 1993. The increase is seen as a sign of growing confidence in the Jordanian government and its economic policies. The Internal Revenue Service is expected to process the returns over the next few months. The results of the processing will be used to calculate the government's revenue for the year 1994. The revenue is expected to be used to fund various government programs and services.

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Jordan, Israel to sign agricultural agreement in few days

JORDAN AND Israel will be signing an agricultural agreement in the coming few days after many months of intensive discussions. The draft agreement, which contains eight main articles, includes giving Jordan the priority to supply Israel with agricultural products whenever the Jewish state decides to import fresh produce. In such a case, Jordanian exports will be totally exempted from customs. Also to be exempted from customs on an annual basis will be 50,000 tonnes of fruits and vegetables, 900 tonnes of olive oil, 30,000 live or slaughtered sheep, 1,000 tonnes of white cheese and 2,000 tonnes of jam.

Under the agreement, to be signed by the agriculture ministers of both countries, Jordan reserves the right to specify the farm products to be imported from Israel. The accord states that Israel would facilitate the delivery of Jordanian agricultural products to the Palestinian areas during the transition period. Joint agricultural projects could be set up, the agreement says (Al Ra'i).

AN EXTRAORDINARY general assembly meeting of the Housing Bank approved raising its capital from JD 18 million to JD 25 million by floating seven million A shares for private subscription. The general assembly also approved capitalising JD 6 million from the capital reserves by awarding each shareholder registered on Aug. 5, 1995 half a share free for every one share of equity (Al Ra'i + Al Aswaq).

THE ARAB Company for Manufacturing White Cement posted record production and sales in 1994 with figures exceeding 96,000 tonnes and 96,000 tonnes respectively. High demand for white cement in the Jordanian and Syrian markets has pressed the company to cut back its exports last year more than it did in 1993. The company made JD 1.25 million in net profits last year due to increased sales, lower costs of production, higher price for cement and the drop in interest paid on loans. The white cement firm had a total of JD 19.6 million in net fixed assets at the end of 1994 (Al Dustour).

THE JORDAN International Trading Centre recorded a JD 231,000 net profit during its 1994/1995 financial year compared to only JD 4,000 in the 1993/1994 financial year. The company boosted its sales to JD 2.1 million at the end of March 1995 from JD 1.2 million at the end of March 1994. Ordinary paper accounted for 70 per cent of total sales in the 1994/1995 year compared to 25 per cent in the previous year. Costs were down to JD 1.74 million from JD 1.08 million. The net profit posted this year enabled the company to cover about 50 per cent of accumulated losses (Al Ra'i).

ROYAL JORDANIAN carried 710,082 passengers during the first seven months of this year, 2.8 per cent more than the number during the same period of last year. Cargo carried during the 1995 period amounted to 37,485 tonnes, 25 per cent over the seven months period of last year. Sources at the planning department said the occupancy rate of seats was 63.6 per cent (64.4 in 1994) and the loading capacity rate was 58.3 per cent (55.6 in 1994) (Al Ra'i).

Diller to take control of television company

NEW YORK (R) — Barry Diller, who built the Fox Television network in the 1980s and has long sought a major media company, unveiled a deal Friday for a string of TV stations that could form the backbone for a new network.

Mr. Diller said he is buying a 20 per cent stake in Silver King Communications Inc., the nation's sixth largest TV station operator with a dozen UHF stations. He also received an option for another 70 per cent stake.

Silver King, based in St. Petersburg, Florida, currently broadcasts the Home Shopping network but analysts said that Mr. Diller will likely begin to build a new network from that base. Mr. Diller has long wanted to control a media company, rather than work for another corporate giant, but his previous bids for Paramount Communications and CBS Inc. ended in failure.

His deal for Silver King is the latest in an explosive summer in the television industry. Walt Disney Co. agreed to buy Capital Cities/ABC Inc. for \$19 billion and Westinghouse Electric Corp. is buying CBS for \$5.4 billion.

Under the Silver King deal, Mr. Diller will buy 20 per cent of the company for \$22.625 a share, and receive an option for control of another 70 per cent of the company's common stock. It was unclear how much cash Mr. Diller was actually putting into the deal, and a spokesman could offer no details.

The option for the 70 per cent stake is controlled by Liberty Media Corp., part of John Malone's Tele-Communications Inc. cable TV empire that ranks as the largest in the nation and which also controls the Home Shopping network.

Liberty Media had been unable to exercise the option because federal laws prohibit a cable TV company from owning broadcast properties. The television stations owned by Silver King, which also has 27 low-powered broadcast stations, were spun off from the Home Shopping network in 1992.

"Malone has had a bad time with Home Shopping, it's performing poorly, so he is hanging in Diller to shore it up," said one analyst who declined to be named. Silver King's UHF stations reach 28 million homes. They serve eight of the 12 largest television markets in the United States, including New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, Dallas, Houston and Cleveland.

Analysts said Mr. Diller will likely start a network on a small scale, offering one day of programming in addition to the Home Shopping schedule and then expanding. With the major television networks now allowed to produce their own programming in competition with the big Hollywood studios, competition will mount and lower the costs for a company seeking programmes like Silver King.

Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. Ltd. started Fox Television in the mid-1980s in a similar way, buying its core stations from Metromedia in a multibillion-dollar deal and then expanding.

Mr. Diller started the Fox network for Mr. Murdoch, but then left and ended up with QVC Network Inc., a Home Shopping service. He then exited QVC and had been rumoured to be looking for a new company ever since his failed bids for Paramount and CBS.

Financial Markets in cooperation with Cairo Amman Bank

Currency	New York	London	Amman
US Dollar	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
British Pound	1.5450	1.5450	1.5450
Deutsche Mark	1.4745	1.4745	1.4745
Swiss Franc	1.2177	1.2177	1.2177
French Franc	5.6640	5.6640	5.6640
Japanese Yen	96.50	96.50	96.50
European Currency Unit	1.2743	1.2743	1.2743

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
US Dollar	5.08	5.08	5.08	5.08
British Pound	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43
Deutsche Mark	4.12	4.12	4.12	4.12
Swiss Franc	2.31	2.31	2.31	2.31
French Franc	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02
Japanese Yen	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
US Dollar	0.7179	0.7179	0.7179	0.7179
British Pound	1.1055	1.1055	1.1055	1.1055
Deutsche Mark	0.4836	0.4836	0.4836	0.4836
Swiss Franc	0.5877	0.5877	0.5877	0.5877
French Franc	0.1402	0.1402	0.1402	0.1402
Japanese Yen	0.7355	0.7355	0.7355	0.7355
Dutch Guilder	0.4816	0.4816	0.4816	0.4816
Swedish Krona	0.0424	0.0424	0.0424	0.0424
Italian Lira	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Belgian Franc	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
US Dollar	1.4740	1.4740	1.4740	1.4740
British Pound	0.04255	0.04255	0.04255	0.04255
Saudi Riyal	0.1895	0.1895	0.1895	0.1895
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.7400	2.7400	2.7400	2.7400
Qatari Riyal	0.1945	0.1945	0.1945	0.1945
Egyptian Pound	0.7000	0.7000	0.7000	0.7000
Omani Riyal	1.8899	1.8899	1.8899	1.8899
UAE Dirham	0.1332	0.1332	0.1332	0.1332
Greek Drachma	0.2875	0.2875	0.2875	0.2875
Cypriot Pound	1.5865	1.5865	1.5865	1.5865

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Confusion, conflicting opinions depress prices, trading at AFM

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Prices dipped at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) Saturday on low volume in the face of uncertainties over Jordanian-Israeli trade and economic ties, but blue chips largely maintained their strength, brokers said. They said the shift in prices was between three and four per cent, mostly affecting industrial companies not listed in the official AFM index. As such, they said, the decline in prices in the official index was not really indicative of the trend in the market. The official index, which is based on 60 major companies from among the nearly 120 listed in the market, closed at 156.69, down 0.28 per cent from the day's opening. The separate sectoral indices showed that commercial banks and financial institutions slipped by 0.14 per cent to close at 182.05 points, services companies by 0.25

per cent to close at 126.46 points, and industrials by 0.36 per cent to close at 126.99 points. No trading was reported in the insurance sector on Saturday. "It was a very bad day," said an AFM broker, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with standing market guidelines. "Trading volume was low at around JD 600,000 and people were not really willing to sell except those who really needed liquidity." The daily AFM report showed that trading for the day was JD 597,164, with commercial banks accounting for JD 230,144, the services sector for JD 140,149 and industrials for 226,871. Volume of shares traded in the parallel market was JD 157,313. According to the broker, "there is a lot of confusion and conflicting opinion among investors, some of them positive and others negative," over economic

and trade links with Iraq following the "recent political developments." That was a reference to the Aug. 8 defection of two top-ranking Iraqi officials to Jordan and Wednesday's speech to the nation by His Majesty King Hussein in which the monarch criticised the Iraqi leadership. "Investors at the AFM are as politicised as any other segment of the Jordanian society," said the broker. "Some say the King's speech, in which he pledged to keep borders open with Iraq, was something that had to be said, while others are

apprehensive that Iraq might retaliate by scaling down economic and trade ties with Jordan," said the broker. "Either way, many investors are opting to hold on to their stocks while looking for signs of Iraqi intentions as well as signals from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait of their plans to consolidate relations with Jordan," added the broker. The broker as well as several other AFM dealers and banking executives said they expected the "wait-and-see" approach to continue in the market for the rest of the week.

"Of course, if there are internal political developments within Iraq — which may have little to do with Jordan — then the market will react more strongly," said a portfolio executive at a commercial bank. Saturday's developments in the market appeared to confirm the view of a senior government source, who said Friday that the Jordanian market would "absorb" the political developments. There will be a negative impact, but it will not be of such a major scale as many would like to project," the source said.

Buffett to buy rest of Geico for \$2.3b

OMAHA, Nebraska (R) — Billionaire Warren Buffett said Friday he would pay \$2.3 billion to buy the rest of Geico Corp., the insurance company he sank most of his savings into as a young investor nearly 45 years ago. The purchase by Mr. Buffett, now one of America's most widely watched and shrewdest investors, will further extend the diverse empire that has already made him the world's second richest businessman. Mr. Buffett, whose net worth of \$10.7 billion ranks him behind Microsoft Corp. Chairman William Gates, said the purchase reflects his longstanding confidence in Geico, which sells auto, home, life and health insurance.

"In 1951, when I was 20, I invested well over half of my net worth in Geico," Mr. Buffett said. "I felt very comfortable with that commitment and I feel equally comfortable with the major commitment that Berkshire Hathaway has made today." Mr. Buffett said he did not expect any staff cuts at Geico, which will become a subsidiary of Berkshire Hathaway Inc., his Omaha, Nebraska-based holding company. As is customary with the 64-year-old investor, the acquired company will retain its management. The terms of the deal call for Berkshire Hathaway to offer \$70 a share for the 49 per cent of Geico it does not already own. Berkshire also owns big stakes in Coca-Cola Co., Capital Cities/ABC Inc., which is being acquired by Walt Disney Co.

Mr. Buffett, in an interview on CNBC-TV, said he decided to buy out the rest of the company now because the time seemed right and he liked the insurer's low-cost business strategy. "It's a low-cost operator and it's been a low-cost operator since 1936," Mr. Buffett said, noting that Washington, D.C.-based Geico does not use sales agents.

He said he would have been willing to buy the rest of the company at other times, but said its current management favoured such a deal, providing the price was right.

COMPANY NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE TRADED	PRV. CLOSING PRICE	CHG.
ARAB BANK P.C.	540	139435	257.000	227.000
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	1950	8777	4.530	4.500
HYDRO PAST INVESTMENT BANK	12400	14952	1.240	1.200
THE HOUSING BANK	2800	11300	5.660	5.620
JORDAN KUNAT BANK	170	472	2.790	2.780
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	1023	3816	3.780	3.760
UNION BANK FOR SAVING & INVESTMENT	196	809	4.150	4.160
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	1203	5854	4.150	4.150
BEIT ALMAJAL SAVING & INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	3000	11088	3.500	3.480
ARAB BANK FOR INVESTMENT	39000	40555	1.050	1.040
ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	1020	9436	5.250	5.200
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	4709	7373	1.580	1.570
BANKS SECTOR	67682	230144	INDEX NUMBER: 182.05	CHANGE: -0.28
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	36067	57384	1.620	1.610
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	2203	2190	2.190	2.180
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL TRADING CENTER	1000	1170	1.180	1.170
JORDAN PAPER PUBLICATION / ALMA	143	1409	9.050	9.050
UNITED HILDA KENT & COMPANY HOTELS	25100	57770	2.180	2.180
ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	3762	12068	3.210	3.210
ZAKA PRIVATE UNIVERSITY	6050	8686	1.370	1.370
SERVICES SECTOR	73772	140149	INDEX NUMBER: 126.46	CHANGE: -0.25
ATTACHEMENT CONST. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	300	257	1.190	1.180
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	7570	27772	3.690	3.690
JORDAN PETROSTATE MINES	450	1352	3.030	3.010
THE ARAB POTASS	350	1738	5.000	5.000
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	1550	14821	9.550	9.500
THE INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	1525	1525	3.100	3.150
THE JORDAN WASTED METLS	1000	7640	7.640	7.640
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	4686	21354	5.020	5.010
JORDAN CERAMIC INDUSTRIES	750	4463	1.950	1.950
JORDAN PAPER & CARDBOARD FACTORIES	176	678	3.850	3.850
SPINNING & WEAVING	550	1082	2.050	1.970
RAPIA INDUSTRIES	200	452	2.310	2.260
DAIR AL JAWA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	2820	29409	7.750	7.750
ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRY	950	5105	5.420	5.420
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	32800	15750	4.90	4.90
NATIONAL INDUSTRIES	750	753	1.010	1.010
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	1500	3110	2.140	2.070
UNIVERSAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	1600	5600	3.500	3.500
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	550	1594	2.170	2.170
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	3500	13681	3.390	3.240
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	16000	32141	2.070	2.030
JORDAN NEW CABLE COMPANY	4727	8072	1.720	1.710
INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	18550	24746	1.370	1.330
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	104139	226071	INDEX NUMBER: 126.99	CHANGE: -0.28
GRAND TOTAL	245593	597164	INDEX NUMBER: 154.69	CHANGE: -0.28
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET	174497			
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET	157313			

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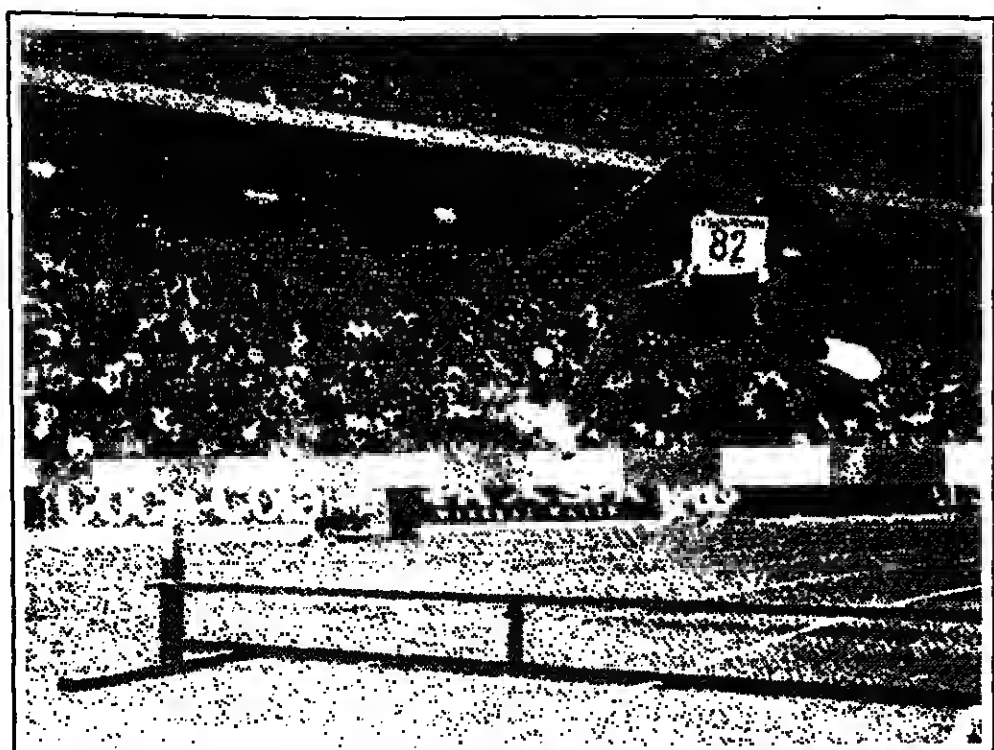
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Kenyan Moses Kiptanui jumps over a hurdle on his way to win the 3000 m steeplechase at the King Baudouin stadium (AFP photo)

Mutola sets world mark in women's 1,000

BRUSSELS (AP) — Maria Mutola of Mozambique set a new world mark in the 1,000 metres Friday at the Van Damme Memorial, sweetening a bitter summer which saw her disqualified at the World Championships.

Mutola became the first woman to run the distance under 2 1/2 minutes, finishing her race in 2:29.34 minutes. U.S. runner Meredith Rainey led her to a quick split time at 600, leaving Mutola to cover the last lap on her own.

Cheered by 38,000 fans, she slashed 1.34 seconds off the 1990 mark of Germany's Christine Wachtel.

The happy scenes contrasted sharply with those from Göteborg early this month, when she was favoured to win the 800. But in the first heat, she was disqualified for running outside her lane and broke down in tears.

Moses Kiptanui also provided an excellent performance and ran the second sub-8 minute steeplechase in history, finishing only .35 seconds outside his world record.

In cold and windy conditions, Kiptanui ran most of the race on his own and finished in 7:59.53 minutes, just short of the record the Kenyan world champion set in Zurich last week.

Michael Johnson, with three world championship gold medals, Gwen Torrence, with two, and Linford Christie, with none, all remained on course for up to 20 kilos in gold after maintaining a perfect record in their event during the third of the Golden four meets.

Ireland's Sonia O'Sullivan the 5,000 and Natalja Shikolenko of Belarus in the javelin of 68.42 metres.

Sensational race in prospect in Belgian Grand Prix

SPA FRANCORCHAMPS, Belgium (AP) — A rainy final qualifying session for the Belgian Grand Prix set up a sensational race Sunday, with two Ferraris on the front row, Damon Hill eighth and world champion Michael Schumacher back in 16th position.

Gerhard Berger took pole ahead of Jean Alesi, with the McLaren Mercedes of Mika Hakkinen third and Schumacher's teammate Johnny Herbert fourth. Hill's teammate David Coulthard was fifth ahead of Mark Blundell in the second McLaren Mercedes.

It was the worst qualifying position of Schumacher's career, and following a heavy accident in morning practice. His car was badly damaged with the German uninjured.

but "frustrated and annoyed."

Hill, who slid off the track in his final qualifying run, said "the car was good on that lap and now it is going to be a very interesting race."

"As far as the championship is concerned," said Hill, who trails the title leader Schumacher by 11 points, "this is not a total disaster, but it was a bit of a messy day really."

Schumacher said his lowly grid position was "obviously very disappointing, but I am sure it will be very entertaining to start from my position."

Spa Francorchamps is known as a circuit on which overtaking is relatively easy, and the powerful Renault engines in Hill's Williams and Schumacher's Benetton meant that they "should be

able to join the leaders quickly," said Berger.

"It will be a great race," he said.

Friday's first qualifying in the rain had seen slow times on the long, fast and demanding Spa Francorchamps track, with Berger again fastest, with Schumacher second from Alesi and Hill. The track was dry as Saturday's final hour started, but rain began falling after three minutes.

"When I saw the first drops falling," Berger said, "I went on the safe side to be sure I had a lap time. That 'safe' lap of 1 min. 54.392 at an average speed of 219.476 kph was good enough for pole."

"I hope I get round the first corner okay with these two guys," Berger said with a grin at Alesi and Hakkinen.

World University Games Japan keeps narrow lead in medals race

FUKUOKA, Japan (AP) — Americans' speed in the swimming pool wasn't quite enough to overtake Japan in the World University Games medals race Saturday as Japan added another gold to its judo collection.

The United States won three of the day's six swimming races, but Japan won two to go with its judo gold, leaving the Japanese ahead 10 to 8 in golds and 26 to 24 in total medals after three days of competition.

Russia's Evgeni Chabaev won the men's all-around gymnastics gold, giving his nation a total of four golds in a collection of 10 medals. South Korea had three golds and nine medals overall.

Brazil broke up the U.S.-Japan duel in swimming when Fernando Scherer and Gustavo Borges placed 1-2 in the men's 100-metre freestyle, giving their nation its first gold here.

Italy also won its first gold when Maria Valentina Vezzali took the women's foil fencing.

China, South Korea and Cuba each picked up one gold in judo.

In direct U.S.-Japan swimming battles Saturday, America's Kurt Jachimowski edged Japan's Hajime Itoi by .28 seconds in the men's 100-metre backstroke, and Japan's Yoko Koikawa, a native of the host city, beat

American Elizabeth Jackson of Michigan by .26 in the women's 200-metre backstroke.

Emily Peters, trailing Japan's Sachiko Miyaji at the midway point, came from behind to lead a 1-2 U.S. finish in the women's 400-metre freestyle. Sarah Anderson was second and Miyaji faded to third.

The women's 4x100-metre freestyle relay quartet — Jessica Tong, Lisa Coole, Mary Edwards and Talar Bendel — captured the third American gold of the day, winning by more than five seconds in 3:46.68. Italy was second in 3:52.06 and Japan third in 3:52.99.

"Our country has such depth and it shows on the relay," said Tong. "It's very competitive in the U.S. so it's a great honour to get on the team. I know 20 other girls who could have swum the relay."

In the men's 100-metre breaststroke, Japan's Akira Hayashi beat two Russians, winning in 1:02.71. Alexander Tkatchev, gold medalist here in the men's 200 breaststroke, was second in 1:03.38 with teammates Stanislav Lopoukhov third in 1:03.66.

Scherer won the 100 freestyle in 49.69 seconds. Borges took the silver in 50.20 and American Josh Davis of Texas was third in 50.36.

The Americans now have

won eight of the 18 swimming races held so far, and Japan has four victories.

Japan leads in its native sport of judo with five golds from 12 events. South Korea has three and Cuba two.

Japan's Kenzo Nakamura pinned down South Korea's Lee Eun-Hak in 2:46 for victory in the men's 71-kilogramme class, but Korean Jung Se-Hoon won a decision over Japan's Ryuta Yumiyu at 65 kilograms.

Japan lost another final when Morales Gonzales of Cuba won a decision over Chiyori Tatenio in the women's 52-kilogramme class.

In fencing, Vezzali defeated Italian compatriot Annamaria Giacometti 15-9 and then Hungary's Reka Szabo, who lost her semifinal 15-13 to Mincza, shared the bronze.

In soccer, striker Daizo Okitso scored two goals and created two others as Japan trounced Slovakia 5-2 and advanced to the quarterfinals along with the defending champion Czech Republic, Iran, Ukraine, Australia, South Korea, Russia and South Africa in the last eight.

The United States won the 1993 medals race with 75 in all, including 30 gold, followed by Canada with 40 and Japan with 30. China stood second in golds, however, with 17.

University Games-briefs

* They may be 8,000 kilometres or more from home, but some of the athletes at the World University Games feel like they are the home team anyway.

After its 110-84 victory over Mexico Friday, the Canadian men's basketball team found crowds of Japanese children waiting to take photos and exchange high fives.

"It's like we're celebrities. It's just great," said forward Brendan Graves.

Guard Keith Vassel added: "It's really flattering because it's not just asking for an autograph. It's like their eyes light up."

At the U.S. men's opening volleyball game, against Lithuania, hundreds of children waved American flags, and sought autographs and handshakes after the Americans' straight-games victory.

"That was tremendous to see this kind of reaction from the crowd. It makes us feel like we are home again," said Tom Hoff of Long Beach State.

* South Korea and the United States each had two players advance to the quarterfinals of the men's singles tennis tournament Saturday at the World University Games.

Top-seeded Lee Hyung-Taik of South Korea downed Zheng Yu of China 6-3, 6-4 and his compatriot Yoon Young-il, the No. seed, ousted Levente Baratosi of Hungary 6-3, 6-0.

David Caldwell, the No. 8 seed from North Carolina, defeated Arata Ito of Japan 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 and No. 11 Paul Goldstein of Stanford took more than two hours to beat New Zealand Andrew Turner 7-5, 6-3.

Top-seeded women Wang Shi-Ting of Taiwan and Rika Hiraki of Japan, regular on the women's professional tour, both advanced with straight set victories along with No. 6 seed Kelly Pace of Texas, who scrambled by Marta Alastrue of Spain 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (9-7).

Jane Chi of UCLA was the first American to lose in singles action, going down 6-2, 6-4 to Kaoru Shibata of Japan.

* Italy was the only team with a perfect record at the conclusion of the first round of water polo competition at the World University Games.

English clubs facing Russian roulette

LONDON (AP) — Three out of the six English clubs in European competition were drawn against Russian opposition on Friday, with Blackburn facing Spartak Moscow in the Champions League and both Manchester United and Liverpool heading behind the old Iron Curtain in the UEFA Cup.

Blackburn's first foray into the European Cup has little glamour with Polish side Legia Warsaw and Norwegian Rosenborg completing their group.

But it does offer the management duo of Ray Harford and Kenny Dalglish an excellent chance to succeed where Arsenal, Leeds and Manchester United failed in reaching the later stages since the ban on English clubs was lifted.

Blackburn reacted with cautious optimism to the draw with assistant manager Tony Parkes saying:

"It would appear that we are in a non-glamorous group but we are aware that there are no soft teams at this level."

"We are confident but now it's something of a journey into the unknown. We had a bad experience against part-timers Trelleborgs last season but that won't effect our positive frame of mind."

"We are the English champions and the English game is still rated very highly. It's going to take a lot of homework on our part over the next few weeks and we are already making plans to watch our opponents in some depth," he added.

Rovers are expected to send a representative to cast

an eye over first opponents Spartak Moscow and that could well be the club's new director of football Kenny Dalglish.

In contrast, Rangers were banded an almighty Champions League challenge. The Scottish Champions will face the might of Juventus, Borussia Dortmund and Steaua Bucharest in the group stages.

That is an awesome test for Walter Smith's side — Paul Gascoigne et al — and Smith said: "It's a very daunting draw but a very interesting one for us."

"Both Borussia Dortmund and Juventus strengthened their sides to win their leagues but at least Juventus have sold Roberto Baggio," he joked.

FA Cup holders Everton have a relatively easy task in Iceland against Reykjavik, while Scottish cup holders Celtic face the unknown Georgians of Dinamo Batumi.

But there were contrasting fortunes for England's four UEFA Cup representatives, all former European winners.

Nottingham Forest will return the first of Brian Clough's two European Cup triumphs against Swedish side Malmo, while Leeds face Jean Tigana's highly-rated French team Monaco.

But Leeds manager Howard Wilkinson said he was relishing the prospect of pitting his team against Monaco.

"What a wonderful spying trip. I am tempted to go on that one myself," he quipped.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

No new term for Martina

NEW YORK (AP) — With one of her main goals accomplished and the other possibly close to being done, Martina Navratilova will not seek another term as president of the WTA tour players association.

"Martina's long history with the Tour and the players was invaluable, and her efforts were most visible in helping to develop the plan for Monica Seles' special ranking consideration upon her return to the tour," Anne Person Worcester, chief executive officer of the WTA, said Thursday.

Navratilova's first goal as president was to get Seles back to competitive tennis. Seles' victory in last week's Canadian Open was her first tournament appearance since being stabbed in Germany two years ago. Navratilova has also tried to land a sponsor for women's tennis, which has been without one since Kraft dropped its affiliation. She says a sponsor might be in place by the end of the U.S. Open, which begins its two-week run Monday. Navratilova, 38, has said she wants to put her personal life ahead of tennis. "We understand the demands on her time and respect her decision not to run again," Worcester said.

UAE driver killed

COWES, Isle of Wight (AP) — Hamed Buhaleeba, one of the United Arab Emirates' most successful sportsmen, was killed Friday in an accident during the world class 2 and 3 powerboat championships. Race officials said Buhaleeba was driving the 32-foot Dubai Victory team catamaran, Victory 1, when it overturned off England's southern coast near Ryde, Isle of Wight. The 30-year-old Buhaleeba was pulled from the boat by aerial paramedics and taken by helicopter to the Royal Navy's vessel Haslar, where he was pronounced dead an hour after the accident. Buhaleeba's brother, Rashid, who was also on the boat, was unhurt.

\$1b for World Cup rights

BERLIN (AP) — A German-American duo of sports marketing companies is offering \$1 billion for world rights for the 2002 World Cup soccer championship to be held in Japan or South Korea. The amount, said to be four times higher than the marketing figure for the 1994 World Cup in the United States, was made public Friday by Hamburg-based UFA Film and Television, a subsidiary of the German media giant Bertelsmann. UFA's sports-marketing division is making its offer together with the American company IMG, run by Mark McCormack, said UFA spokesman Stefan Thies.

Muster cruises past Arrese

UMAG, Croatia (AP) — Top-seeded Thomas Muster of Austria on Friday took only 64 minutes to crush Jordi Arrese of Spain 6-1, 6-3 and advance to the semifinals of the \$375,000 Croatia Open tennis tournament. Muster, third on the ATP list, has already won three matches in the tournament — all against Spanish opponents — and will face another Spaniard in the semifinals: fifth-seeded Francisco Clavet. Clavet had less trouble than expected, defeating Magnus Gustafsson of Sweden 6-2, 6-3. Third seed Andrea Gaudenzi of Italy beat sixth-seeded Javier Sanchez of Spain, 6-2, 6-4. Seventh-

seeded Carlos Costa of Spain seemed provided a big surprise by beating second-seeded countryman Alberto Berasategui, 6-4, 6-4.

Sampdoria lose Zenga

GENOVA, Italy (R) — Sampdoria goalkeeper Walter Zenga injured his knee on the eve of the new Serie A soccer season and will not play again this year. Club doctor Gian Maria Vassallo said the 35-year-old former Italy goalkeeper would be unable to play for between four and six months after tearing cruciate ligaments in his left knee in a training session on Friday afternoon. "I went out to stop (Fausto) Salsano, but he sold me a dummy... I don't know what happened next. I tried to change direction but my left leg froze," Zenga said.

Kafelnikov, Rosset in semis

COMMACK, New York (AP) — Defending champion Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia advanced to the semifinals of the Hamlet Cup on Friday night, beating Shuzo Matsuo of Japan 5-7, 6-2, 6-2. "He served very well in the first set and it was tough to get a rhythm on the return," said Kafelnikov, who will face No. 3 Marc Rosset of Switzerland. "In the second and third sets I returned much better." Rosset, 30, defeated against Kafelnikov, beat Cedric Pioline of France 7-5, 6-7 (3-7), 6-1. Rosset was up a service break in the second set, but Pioline broke back and won the tiebreaker to force the third set. Jan Siemerink of the Netherlands will play Rocco Furlan of Italy in the other semifinal. Siemerink beat Todd Woodbridge of Australia 6-4, 6-2 and Furlan defeated Malivi Washington 6-4, 1-6, 6-2.

Fan killed at 1000 Lakes Rally

JYVAESKYLAE, Finland (AP) — A 20-year-old woman spectator at the 1000 Lakes Rally in Jyvaeskylae, Finland was killed Saturday when she was hit by a car during the race. The accident happened only 200 metres (660 feet) after the start, where the woman was crossing the road with several other spectators. She was hit by the advance car, which clears the road for the competition cars, although the other spectators managed to get out of the way. The car, driven by Belgian Rally driver Bruno Thiry, rolled and landed upside-down in a ditch. Thiry was not injured. The 1000 Lakes Rally, which ends Sunday, will continue as scheduled, organisers said.

Italy refuse to play in Croatia

ROME (AP) — Italian football federation president Antonio Matarrese on Friday said the national side would not play a European qualifying match in Croatia because of his personal desire to avoid a war zone. Matarrese, in an interview with Corriere Della Sera on the Oct. 8 match in Split, said: "The Italian team will neither play in Split nor Zagreb not because of fear (of bombardment), but because neither me, nor Sacchi (Arrigo Sacchi, Italy's coach) want to play where there is a war." However Matarrese is said to be in agreement to play the match in Vienna. Croatian Alen Boksic, who plays for Italian side Lazio, said: "I would be very unhappy if the fixture was played at Viena. It would not be fair — in fact, it would be absurd."

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Belgian Frederik Durborg on his way to set the sixth best time in the men's 200 metres breaststroke at the European Swimming Championships (AP photo)

European Swimming Championships

Bleak day for former champions and medallists

VIENNA (R) — Past champions and medallists were scattered in disarray in the heats of the European Swimming Championships on Saturday.

Germany's former Olympic champion Daniela Hunger fell by the wayside at the first stage of her attempt to win the women's 200 metres individual medley for a record fourth consecutive time.

Frenchman Franck Esposito was denied a place in the 200 metres butterfly final by 0.04 seconds, having won the gold medal in 1991 and the silver in 1993.

Lithuanian Raimundas Maznolis, world and European bronze medallist, fell short of a place in the men's 50 metres freestyle final by the same fraction, touching in a below-par 22.95 seconds.

All three were ninth overall in their events, a frustrating one-place away from qualification for the afternoon finals.

Britain's Martin Harris, bronze medallist at the last European Championships in Sheffield in 1993, could manage only the 13th-fastest qualifying time in the men's 100 metres backstroke in the 50-metre stadium pool.

And at the end of the morning Slovenia's Igor Majoli, the 1993 bronze medallist, failed to make the 1,500 freestyle final.

But Russian world champions Denis Pankratov and Alexander Popov suffered no such indignities as they aimed for their second individual titles of the 11-day championships.

Pankratov, who shattered the nine-year-old 100 metres butterfly record on Wednesday, was the only swimmer to crack two minutes in the 200 butterfly heats.

The 21-year-old Russian won in 1:59.20 and looked in the form to put his 1:55.22 world record, set in Cannes, France, in June, under threat.

Poland's Konrad Gulk (2:00.09), Chris-Carol Brenner of Germany (2:00.18) and 100 butterfly silver medallist Denis Simanov of Ukraine (2:00.19) were the next-fastest qualifiers.

Double Olympic gold medallist Popov, who retained his 100 freestyle crown on Thursday and anchored the victorious Russian 4x100 freestyle relay on Friday, won his 50 metres freestyle heat in the third-fastest overall time of 22.79.

Britain's world short-course champion Mark Foster claimed the fastest qualifying time of 22.66 — 0.02 seconds faster than 1993 European silver medallist Christophe Kalfayan of France.

Germany's Timo Weber led qualifiers in the men's 100 metres backstroke in 56.01, ahead of Russian Vladimir Selkov.

Spanish world champion Martin Lopez-Zubero is ruled out with a back injury.

German former world champion Joerg Hoffmann made a confident start to his attempt to win the European 1,500 freestyle title for the fourth time, leading the qualifiers for Sunday's final.

Hungarian Olympic champion Krisztina Egervari, who declined to defend her 100 backstroke title, showed she was still the best at the event in Europe by swimming

the first leg of the medley relay heats more than a second faster than the time with which Denmark's Mette Jacobsen won the individual final.

Van Almsick's interview came up for

Franzi Van Almsick is in trouble again. This time the 17-year-old German swimming champion is accused of

calling Adolf Hitler her favourite historical figure. In a separate box along with a profile story, Swiss sports weekly Zuercher Sport lists Van Almsick's "lieblingsfigur" or favourite figures: Among them American actor Tommy Lee Jones, German tennis player Boris Becker and Hitler.

In the accompanying interview, the 10-time European

swimming champion acknowledges reading "Mein Kampf" (my struggle) and being curious about German history.

Van Almsick has been known for making blunt statements about life in former East Germany as well as talking about her sex life at 15 with a boyfriend 10 years her senior.

"I want to know how it all happened, especially World War II," the 200-metre freestyle world champion and record holder was quoted in the publication. "When people talk about Hitler, they say how evil he was and how many people he killed... in fact he was quite smart."

In German-speaking countries of Europe, Van Almsick is well known and very popular, especially among youth.

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Novotna, Maleeva and Rubin advance to semis

MAHWAH, New Jersey (AP) — Second-seeded Jana Novotna, deprived of her serve and volley game by strong winds, took control in the third set and advanced to the semifinals of the Pathmark Classic with a 6-2, 2-6, 6-0 victory over Iva Majoli on Friday.

"I didn't have as many opportunities to come in, the wind made a difference," said Novotna, ranked No. 4 in the world. "If it wasn't that windy I'd probably be at the net more. But I was good enough to finish off the point from the back."

In a night match at the Crossroads Corporate Centre, third-seeded Magdalena Maleeva beat Austria's Judith Wiesner 6-2, 4-6, 6-4. Maleeva, ranked No. 7 in the world, will play Novotna on the semifinal Saturday.

Sixth-seeded Chanda Rubin will face Ai Sugiyama of Japan in the other semifinal. Rubin beat Marianne Werdel Wimmer 6-2, 6-1 on Friday. Sugiyama, who upset top-seeded Conchita Martinez earlier in the week, advanced to the semifinals Thursday by beating Nicole Pietrangeli of Australia.

Novotna defeated Majoli, ranked a career-high 12th, in the quarter-finals of the Canadian Open two weeks ago in straight sets. The Croatian gave Novotna more of a challenge this time with her blistering groundstrokes.

"I started off well in the first set and Iva had a very good run in the second set," Novotna said. "She didn't miss one ball, she took advantage of me not serving so well. But this is what tennis is all about. You can play well in the first set, your opponent can play even bet-

ter in the second. But the third decides it."

In the final set, Novotna broke Majoli in the first game and never looked back.

"If she plays well, she's a dangerous player," Novotna said. "But she's not consistent enough to maintain that form through the whole match."

Majoli, 18, who turned pro in 1991, has beaten all the top 10 players except Steffi Graf and Novotna. Majoli hopes to have another crack at Novotna if both make it to the fourth round of the U.S. Open.

"I think I want too much when I play Jana," Majoli



Bulgaria's Magdalena Maleeva

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The bidding:

10 SOUTH 10 NORTH EAST

1NT Pass 2NT Pass

Pass Pass

Opening lead: Ten of a

Spot cards are given to value in the point count, but possessing a key spot can make all the difference in the world. Watch how one of the world's great technicians, Italy's Mauro Forquet, made use of a vital pip. South's one-club opening bid was artificial and strong, promising a minimum of 17 or more points.

North's one-club response showed an ace or two kings, and the rest of the auction was natural.

Most declarers would win the opening lead in hand with the ace and then a club to the queen and ace. South's ace return would go to the queen and a club to the ace.

South would have to guess the club position or rely on a favorable heart situation for the contract.

Forquet saw the power of the eight of clubs. That would guarantee the contract if either the jack or nine of clubs was doubled, or if the suit divided 3-3.

After winning the first trick with the jack of spades, Forquet played off two high diamonds to make sure the suit would produce four tricks.

Diamonds were then abandoned in favor of a club to the queen and ace. The ace return was won in hand, and the king of clubs fell the jack.

Nine tricks were now guaranteed, and there was an easy overtrick to be had. Declarer cashed the queen of diamonds, overtook the ace with the seven to cash the king of spades, then led a club to the eight.

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Croatia vows to take Serbian stronghold

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — Croatia vowed on Saturday to retake the last major rebel Serb region on its territory — either by negotiation or by force.

"We are faced with the task of liberating... eastern Slavonia. We will quite certainly do this in the coming months either by peaceful means or by a new (operation) storm," said Croatian President Franjo Tudjman.

Eastern Slavonia, which borders on Serbia and Croatia, is a fertile and oil-rich region. Diplomats have said a Croatian move against the area could lead to a clash between the Balkan neighbours.

Mr. Tudjman spoke shortly before a U.N.-mediated ceasefire between Croat and rebel Serb forces in eastern Slavonia was to take effect on Saturday.

He then boarded a train to ride through the Knin-Krajina region where his troops crushed rebel Serbs and recaptured a large swathe of territory with "Operation Storm."

It was the Croatian army's biggest victory since the Serbs revolted in 1991 and declared their own state. That move came after Croatia broke away from former Yugoslavia.

About 90 British peacekeepers from Gorazde left Belgrade on Saturday on their way home. The last peacekeepers are due out next week, leaving 65,000 Muslims protected from surrounding Serbs only by the threat of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) air strikes.

Washington has sought to

reassure Bosnia that it stood by a promise to defend Muslim Gorazde in the eastern part of the country with NATO air strikes.

"The NATO commitment, the American commitment, the commitment... still applies," Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke said on Friday.

Major powers meeting in London last month agreed that NATO would carry out air strikes if the Serbs, who have already overrun two other nearby enclaves, tried to seize Gorazde.

Mr. Holbrooke was due to fly to Europe on Sunday to press a new U.S. plan aimed at ending four years of bloodshed in former Yugoslavia but he played down his chances of success.

The U.S. initiative was knocked off track after three top envoys died in a road accident last Saturday on their way to the Bosnian capital, Sarajevo.

U.S. officials launched their initiative hoping to take advantage of a shift in the balance of power in the region after Croatia recaptured a fifth of its territory in the Krajina region with "Operation Storm."

The Washington plan to end the war in Bosnia and the crisis in former Yugoslavia as a whole calls for territorial swaps and would lift sanctions on Serbia if it recognised its neighbours.

Asked about its prospects, Mr. Holbrooke said: "I'm not going to predict success. The success chance is pretty small. In Bosnia, the worst-case scenario usually takes place."

The United Nations mean-

while reported that a skirmish broke out after Bosnia government soldiers attacked British peacekeepers in Gorazde Friday. The British killed two of the intruders without sustaining casualties themselves.

A U.N. spokesman, Alexander Wivanko, said the incident involving an estimated 30 soldiers was "an act of banditry." The United Nations lodged a protest to the Bosnian government in Sarajevo.

But a late night report by the London-based Press Association quoted the British as saying that only four or five intruders were involved, with perhaps only one of them armed and some in civilian clothes. A British Defence Ministry spokesman in London said they were probably "local boogies" out to steal goods.

The Bosnian army's press office in Gorazde had issued a statement late Friday saying that regular forces were not involved.

Gorazde has been named as territorial bargaining chip in published accounts of the U.S. peace initiative, even though the government has vowed not to abandon it.

The proposal reportedly would allow land swaps to help divide Bosnia between its Muslim-Croat majority and rebel Serbs. The government would get 51 per cent of Bosnia and the Serbs 49 per cent.

Rebel Serb leader Radovan Karadzic says the Serbs could accept no less than 64 per cent of the land, while the Bosnian government insists it will not give up Gorazde for other territory, as the plan reportedly requires.



SCIENCE WEEK: His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Saturday opens the third Jordanian Science Week at the Higher Council for Science and Technology (see page one) (Petra photo)

Sudan says it freed all political detainees

KHARTOUM (R) — Sudan on Saturday announced it had freed 32 political prisoners, including former prime minister Sadeq Al Mahdi, and said the country's jails were now empty of political detainees.

Human rights groups have said the Islamist government holds at least 200 political prisoners.

Dr. Mahdi, the leader of Sudan's biggest party, was given a hero's welcome by thousands of his supporters. He was released in a military coup in 1989 led by Lieutenant-General Omar Hassan Al Bashir and has been detained several times since.

Abdul Basit Sabdrat, minister of culture and information, said Sudan's political prisoners were now empty after the release of 19 members of the Umma Party of Al Mahdi, eight members of the Sudan Communist Party and five members of the Baath Party.

Sudanese officials have put the number of political pris-

oners at between 30 and 70 but rights groups said it was not less than 200, most of whom are members of the Umma Party, the Communist Party of Sudan and the Baath Arab Party.

First Vice President Al Zubeir Muhammad Saleh said the government was currently working on reaching a national accord. He gave no details.

Sudan has announced amnesties and national accords in the past in a bid to break out of growing international isolation.

A reporter saw Dr. Mahdi driven out of the prison in Khartoum on Saturday, three days after an announcement by Gen. Bashir that all political prisoners in Sudan will be freed.

He was sitting in front of a four-wheel-drive vehicle with three of his aides sitting in the back.

Wearing a long gown which is the traditional dress of northern Sudan, Dr.

(Continued on page 7)

Extremists kill 9 women in Algeria

ALGIERS (Agencies) — Extremists in eastern Algeria killed the wives of nine local patrolmen by slitting their throats and then decapitating some of them, the daily Le Matin reported Saturday.

It said the incident occurred overnight last Saturday at El Garem near the town of Mila. Six victims were decapitated and the bodies of the three others were completely charred.

In two of the cases, the attacks had been carried out by the victims' own brother and brother-in-law who then "dreadfully mutilated" the bodies, the paper added.

The local patrols were set up a few months ago by the interior ministry aimed at deterring armed attacks, but their members have often been targeted by extremists such as the radical Armed Islamic Group (GIA) who recently issued threats against the men's wives.

The GIA charges that "Muslim women cannot legitimately remain with their

husbands" who are considered the "enemies of God." Some 371 women have been killed by Islamic fundamentalists since last year and hundreds of others kidnapped, tortured or raped, according to the Algerian security forces.

Meanwhile, another daily, Liberte, said Saturday that 300 people were arrested Wednesday during a sweep by Algerian police in the Algiers Casbah.

"They had provided support to the armed groups for months, in terms of lodgings and information," the daily said, adding that 20 of the detained belonged directly to Islamic fundamentalist groups.

The paper noted there had been an upsurge of violence in the area over the last few days, which included the killing of an imam and an Algerian journalist.

Security forces claimed the journalist was killed by a

(Continued on page 7)

Military option open with Sudan-Mubarak

CAIRO (R) — President Hosni Mubarak said that all options — including military action — remained open in dealing with Sudan, which Cairo accuses of hosting terrorists seeking to overthrow the Egyptian government.

"All options are open. If we were forced to resort to the difficult alternative (military action) to protect the country, we will carry out any step," Mr. Mubarak told the London-based Arabic daily Al Hayat in a lengthy interview published on Saturday.

Mr. Mubarak said he did not trust the Sudanese regime led by Lieutenant-General Omar Hassan Al Bashir and backed by leader of the National Islamic Front (NIF), Hassan Al Turabi. Egypt has accused Sudan

of being involved in the failed assassination attempt against Mr. Mubarak in Addis Ababa last June. Relations between the two neighbours have reached their lowest level in years and a clash in the disputed border desert area of Halab took place following Egypt's claims.

Mr. Mubarak said that a recent government reshuffle in Sudan in which officials known for their close links to Dr. Tourabi were removed was a failed attempt to improve their image.

"They want to improve their image, but the black picture cannot be improved and a new picture has to come," Mr. Mubarak said.

In his interview, the Egyptian president repeated allegations that Khartoum

hosted the suspected terrorists who carried out the assassination attempt.

Mr. Mubarak said five militants arrested recently on their way from Sudan to Egypt confessed that they received military training with those who carried out the attack against him.

Egypt's largest militant organisation, Al Gamaa Al Islamiya, has claimed responsibility for the attack against Mr. Mubarak.

The Ethiopian authorities have said that all those who took part in the attack were Egyptians, but the planning took place in a third country which was not named.

Mr. Mubarak said that Ethiopia has asked Sudan to hand over suspected militants who allegedly took part in

the assassination attempt, but Khartoum has ignored the demand.

He added that Dr. Tourabi's NIF was running 17 camps where military training is offered to Muslim militants from all over the world. Khartoum denies the existence of such camps and insists they are farms.

"Now the Sudanese are trying to claim innocence, but their role in supporting terrorism is known for everyone, whether far or close," Mr. Mubarak said.

"We are telling them that extremists whom they are hosting play a dangerous role against us, and I am warning them. Egypt is a big country and the people are asking for action against them, but I am saying, 'no no'."

Guerrillas attack Israelis and allies in Lebanon

MARJAYOUN (AP) — Guerrillas attacked Israeli forces and their militia allies in occupied South Lebanon Saturday, wounded a militiaman and touching off artillery and mortar bombardments.

Fighters of Hizbollah, or Party of God, fired rocket-propelled grenades and machine-guns at three outposts manned by the Israeli and the South Lebanon Army (SLA), security sources reported.

There were no reports of casualties from the early morning attacks on the Zimra, Kfar Nuha and Tomat Niba on the northern edge of the Israeli-occupied border enclave.

Israeli and SLA artillery fired some 35 shells on suspected Hizbollah positions around Masbarga, 20 kilometres north of Marjayoun, the main town in the so-called "security zone."

Hizbollah attacked two other SLA outposts in the afternoon, touching off retaliatory shelling near the villages of Kafra and Yater, the sources said.

No casualties were reported in the attacks or the shelling.

But an SLA fighter was wounded in a Hizbollah bomb ambush inside the security zone the late afternoon, the sources reported. Israeli and SLA gunners responded with barrages of artillery fire on suspected Hizbollah hideouts in nearby villages.

Three Hizbollah guerrillas were killed by Israeli troops Friday as they tried to infiltrate into the enclave.

The slain fundamentalists were buried Saturday in Baalbek, a Shiite stronghold in the Syrian-controlled Bekaa Valley in eastern Lebanon.

About 3,000 Hizbollah supporters shouting "Death to America" and "Death to Israel" marched through the streets behind the wooden coffins.

Sheikh Mohammad Yazbek, a senior Hizbollah official in the Bekaa, warned the Israelis: "We shall hum the ground under their feet and the sky over their heads."

So far this year, 126 people have been killed and 288 wounded in South Lebanon, the last active warfront in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Twelve people have been slain in the last week.

Sanaa to deport Swedish officer and Iraqi family

SANAA (Agencies) — Yemen will deport two Swedish police officers and the Iraqi family the police were escorting to this Arabian Peninsula state, a Yemeni security official said on Saturday.

The Swedish officers, a man and a woman, had brought the four Iraqis to Yemen after the family had been expelled from Sweden. The Iraqis, who had previously lived in Yemen, had chosen to come here rather than return to their homeland.

But Yemen's deputy chief of state security police, Mubammad Al Surami, told Reuters the Swedish officers and the four Iraqis — a married couple and their children — had entered Yemen illegally and would be deported.

A Swedish foreign ministry spokeswoman said the two officers had escorted the expelled Iraqi family on Aug. 1. She said that when they attempted to leave Yemen, authorities seized their passports and prevented them from leaving, although they were not taken into custody, she said.

Ms. Surami said the Swedish and Iraqi, who came from Sweden via Frankfurt, were now staying at two hotels in the Yemeni capital Sanaa. But hotel officials

contacted by Reuters denied any knowledge of their presence.

Ms. Surami said: "It appeared the Iraqis got rid of their Iraqi passports somewhere before coming to Yemen and they arrived without passports. The Swedish arrived without entry visas."

"This is against the law and they (the group) will be deported to where they had come from once investigations are completed."

He declined to say whether they would be deported to Frankfurt or to Sweden. He also declined to give the names of the Iraqis or the Swedes.

An official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told AFP the Iraqi family of four and the Swedes were to leave for Stockholm via Bonn on a flight Saturday.

The decision to return them was taken "in agreement with the Swedish authorities, given that the members of the Iraqi family do not have travel documents and have political refugee status," the official said.

He expressed fears, however, that the Iraqis, who lived in Yemen before they went to Sweden, might refuse to travel on from Bonn to Stockholm.

Somalis flood home from refugee camps in Kenya

LIBOI, Kenya (AFP) — As the U.N. refugee agency tries to bring order from the chaos provoked by Zaire's moves to expel the hordes of Rwandans on its territory, it can take heart from a success the other side of Africa.

The Somalis who fled civil war and famine in their country three or four years ago to subsist on humanitarian rations in camps in the middle of nowhere across the border in Kenya have decided it is safe to return home.

While no end is in sight to the anarchy in the Somalia capital of Mogadishu, the general fighting that was feared after the failure of the United Nations peacekeeping exercise has not broken out.

Reassuring news brought by truck drivers and cross-border smugglers prompted staff of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to launch a partially assisted voluntary repatriation programme.

Lists of those who wanted to go home were drawn up, but the UNHCR left most of the organisation to the refugees themselves.

"We are only following the movement, and now we are having to slow it down," said Jean-Claude de Rego, UNHCR field officer at Dadaab, 540 kilometres east of Nairobi.

"In my camp this week I had 1,400 candidates for 900 places."

As he spoke a fleet of 27 ancient trucks run by private operators waited at the small border post of Liboi to ship home the latest batch of some 2,380 people.

"Yesterday we gave them food for three months, and cooking and washing utensils," Mr. de Rego said. "This morning each one gets 30 dollars."

The heads of the various families, which in some cases were adolescents of no more than 14 years old, lined up, exchanging their ration cards for crisp new bank notes, placing a thumb print beside their names in guise of receipt.

Their faces were serious and none spoke or gave any sign of thanks. "That shocked me to begin with, but once used to it," the field officer said.

"I suppose it's a question of culture: They consider it their due."

In fact the money did not stay intact for long. The sharp-eyed truck drivers swooped on the refugees as soon as they emerged, demanding \$10 or \$15 to drive them to Doble, the nearest town in Somalia, and more for a longer journey.

Mohammad Dubet, 45, turned the small bundle of greenbacks over and over in his hands. "It's the first time in my life I have touched dollars," he smiled. "How much are they worth?"

Mr. Dubet said he was going back because he had learned that matters had resolved themselves at Dadaab, his home, and life there promised to be better than in the refugee camps.

"There are too many problems here," he said. "Robbery, and rape when the women go looking for wood. Even if life is hard, I prefer to face that sort of problem in my own country."

Some refugees have already gone before on reconnaissance at their own expense, sending back news



Somali refugees are crammed in a truck on their way home after spending two or three years in eastern Kenya (AFP photo)

and letters with the truck drivers.

"My family is in Buhale, I know they are waiting for us," said Abdullahi Abdul Sheikh, 39. "I think the war will not start up again, and we can plant for our food."

"They know exactly what they are going back to," Mr. de Rego said. "Every week the number of candidates for return increases, and there are no new arrivals, so we can conclude things are reasonable, despite alarming reports on the food situation in

certain areas."

As the diesel engines of the trucks coughed into life and the flowered print dresses of the women crammed into the rear sections flapped in the wind, some of the refugees waved and the children grinned.

But while they said they were happy to be going home, there was still anxiety.

A Kenyan police officer detailed to escort the convoy said the six kilometres to the border explained that the fare demanded by the truck-drivers included payment for

"protection" to the Somalia clan militia controlling the area.

For those who did not belong to the clan, or one of its allies, going home via Liboi was too risky, Mr. de Rego said. "For them we are looking at other ways, boat, or plane."

So far more than 28,000 people have returned to Somalia since last December, and the UNHCR, which has a budget of \$12.2 million for 1995, aims to get the figure to 45,000 by the end of this year.

Column

Greek divers find Titanic's torpedoed sister

ATHENS (AFP) — Greek divers have found the wreck of the British liner the Britannic, sister-ship of the Titanic, after a two year search in the waters off southern mainland Greece, the Antenna television station reported. The Britannic, which was used as a hospital ship by British forces in World War I, sank with the death of 56 people after being torpedoed by an enemy submarine on Nov. 21, 1916. Its more famous sister, the 46,000 ton Titanic, went down on its maiden voyage after hitting an iceberg in the North Atlantic in April 1912, with the death of 1,490 people. Its remains were discovered and explored 3,000 metres (10,000 feet) down in 1985. The Olympic, the first of the trio of giant trans-Atlantic liners to be built for the White Star Line, was scrapped in 1935.

Singapore's ghosts return to purgatory

SINGAPORE (AP) — The gates of hell closed Friday and Singaporeans bid farewell to the ghosts who lived with them for the last month. Nobody appeared spooked at the end of the Hungry Ghosts Festival — a colourful mix of ancestor worship, Chinese opera, pop concerts and show of wealth in this otherwise prim city of colour-coordinated skyscrapers. Many Chinese believe that the spirits of the dead are let out from hell once a year to stay with living relatives during the seventh month of the lunar calendar. But those without living descendants or those abandoned by their kin wander around, hungry and angry. For one month, giant cylindrical joss sticks painted with red, green and yellow dragons have been burned in most neighbourhoods of Singapore, where 76 per cent of the population of 3.3 million is Chinese. Each year, feasts are held in public housing parks, where roaming ghosts are invited to choose from buffet spreads of chicken, pork, rice and fruit. Later on, the food is also consumed by living guests. In earlier days, Chinese operas known as "wayang" were organised for the dead ancestors at late-night entertainment shows. Now, pop concerts are more common. This year, Singapore's attention was caught by a blond, green-eyed performer from France who sang fluently in the Chinese Hokkien and Mandarin dialects at several shows. But the best feature of the festival embodying the spirit of wealth is the burning of mock currency, television sets, mobile phones, furniture and all other conceivable comforts of modern life.

Poland approves anti-smoking law

WARSAW (R) — Poland's lower house of parliament overwhelmingly approved a tough anti-smoking law which bans cigarette sales to minors and curbs tobacco advertising. The bill, passed by 335-9 with 28 abstentions, prohibits selling tobacco products to people under 18 years of age and limits smoking in public places to restricted areas. It bans cigarette vending machines and allows local governments to set their own anti-smoking regulations. It also bans tobacco advertising from television, radio, publications for youth, schools, universities, cultural institutions and sporting events. Health analysts say the law is badly needed in Poland, where nearly one third of the population smokes and the annual tobacco consumption reaches 100 billion cigarettes. The bill still needs to clear the Senate and be signed by President Lech Walesa to become law, but neither is expected to oppose it.

Alcoholic lollipops fail to sweeten critics

DUBLIN (AFP) — Children too young to drink legally can get an early taste of adult life with a cider-flavoured lollipop and a promise of gin and tonic for Christmas — an invention that has infuriated anti-alcohol groups. Lolly-maker Silver Pail, based in Cork, southern Ireland, said its lollipops only contain 0.1 per cent alcohol and has already started selling its cider-flavoured version.

Russia to give... Kuwait arrests 3 Iraqi infiltrators... Sudan: Egypt is colonising Halab... Bais fight in small capital... Canada explodes alien airport... Poland approves anti-smoking law... Warsaw (R) — Poland's lower house of parliament overwhelmingly approved a tough anti-smoking law which bans cigarette sales to minors and curbs tobacco advertising. The bill, passed by 335-9 with 28 abstentions, prohibits selling tobacco products to people under 18 years of age and limits smoking in public places to restricted areas. It bans cigarette vending machines and allows local governments to set their own anti-smoking regulations. It also bans tobacco advertising from television, radio, publications for youth, schools, universities, cultural institutions and sporting events. Health analysts say the law is badly needed in Poland, where nearly one third of the population smokes and the annual tobacco consumption reaches 100 billion cigarettes. The bill still needs to clear the Senate and be signed by President Lech Walesa to become law, but neither is expected to oppose it.